

**A HEURISTIC STUDY OF CLIENTS' SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES IN THE
COUNSELING PROCESS**

WONG CHING CHING

Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Education, University of Malaya

In Fulfillment of Requirement for the Degree of

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Field of Study: Counseling

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Elizabeth Grace Wong Ching Ching

ABSTRACT

This study addressed and described the spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. The heuristic inquiry approach was applied to explore the relationship between the clients' and the therapist's spiritual experiences with the transpersonal self. The study consisted of seven participants, women aged over 35 who had gone through at least seven psychotherapy sessions with the researcher / therapist. The Satir systemic therapy, existential therapy, the hypnotherapy and expressive arts therapy were among the psychotherapy approaches that generate the spirituality of the participants to connect with the self. The results indicated that all the participants and the therapist were able to engage with their spiritual self in the psychotherapeutic process. The process of transformation and self-integration has taken place during the psychotherapeutic process which enhanced the sense of vocation in the participants' and the therapist's life. The spiritual experiences were expressed in explicit and implicit ways. Among the spiritual experiences, there were theistic and non-theistic spirituality as well as humanistic perspective in the concept of individuation and self-actualization. The spiritual experiences were manifested in the form of energy movement and visions that carried messages, the out of space sensation, the chirping sounds of the birds and the sense of stability at the core of the being. The spiritual experiences were also manifested in the form of feelings such as the feeling of warmth, peace, tranquility, love and being touched. Each participant and the therapist have finally illustrated the individual self with the unique self-depiction. The self of each participant was symbolized in the form of a lighted candle, a sailing ship, a little angel, a flying balloon, the integrated colors, a renewed ordinary lady and a blossoming lotus. Whereas the therapist's self depiction is in the form of a dove. The poem and the drawing depict the psychotherapy journey.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mengutarakan dan menggambarkan pengalaman rohaniah dalam proses psikoterapi. Pendekatan heuristik telah digunakan untuk menjelajahi perkaitan antara pengalaman rohaniah dengan jiwa diri. Kajian ini terdiri daripada tujuh orang peserta wanita yang berumur lebih daripada 35 tahun, yang telah menjalani sekurang-kurangnya tujuh sesi psikoterapi dengan penyelidik / terapis. Terapi sistemik Satir, terapi eksistensial, terapi hipnosis dan terapi ekspresi seni merupakan antara peralatan kaunseling yang digunakan untuk menjana dan mengaitkan kerohanian peserta dengan jiwa dirinya. Hasil kajian menunjukkan semua peserta dan terapis dapat berhubung dengan kerohanian masing-masing dalam proses psikoterapi. Pengalaman rohaniah mereka dapat digambarkan dengan cara eksplisit dan cara tersirat. Proses transformasi dan integrasi diri yang berlaku semasa psikoterapi telah merangsang seru para peserta dan terapis dalam kehidupan mereka. Dalam pengalaman rohaniah tersebut, terdapat pengalaman kerohanian yang berbentuk ketuhanan dan bukan ketuhanan serta perspektif kemanusiaan yang digambarkan dalam konsep individuasi dan realisasi sendiri. Pengalaman rohaniah telah dijelmakan dalam bentuk pergerakan tenaga dan visi yang membawa mesej, sensasi di luar angkasa, bunyi kicauan burung serta perasaan stabil dalam lubuk hati. Pengalaman rohaniah setiap peserta juga dimanifestasikan dalam bentuk perasaan seperti rasa panas, aman, tenang, kasih dan terharu. Setiap peserta akhirnya mengilustrasikan ciri individu dengan suatu penggambaran diri yang unik yang dilambangkan dengan sebatang lilin yang bernyala, sebuah kapal yang berlayar, seorang pari-pari kecil, sebiju belon yang melambung, warna yang bersepadu, seorang wanita yang biasa dan baru serta sekuntum bunga teratai yang sedang berkembang. Terapis mengilustrasikan dirinya sebagai burung merpati. Puisi dan lukisan digunakan untuk menggambarkan perjalanan psikoterapi dalam kajian ini.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, spirituality has become an important element in the lives of people. Just as individuals have attended and become more sensitized to the physical health dimension by paying attention to diet and exercise, there is increasing interest of people addressing openly on the subject of spirituality in one's life as well (Idler, 2008). The people believe "spirituality is vital for growth and essential for dealing with life's problems" (Sperry, 2012, p. 25). Hence, it is not surprising that those in the helping profession such as clinicians, teachers, counselors, trainers, and pastors, as well as the professionals in the corporate world, are taking spirituality as an important dimension in their respective roles (Winfield, 2013).

In relation to spirituality and religiosity, the researcher believes the seeds of faith and values of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism have been sown in this country since the 14th century. The people of Malaysia have been living their faiths respectively throughout the past 300 to 400 years (Tsui, 2009). By the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, there were salient visible manifestations of faith and belief in the lives of the people in this nation. It is quite obvious that spirituality has been a major divine force in all the religions, cultures and traditions in this country (Husain, 2007).

The scenario of spiritual interest has encouraged enthusiastic pioneering efforts to accumulate literature concerning spirituality which have been written in the form of books and journal articles in this country; such as Husain, 2007, 2009; Razali, Aminah

and Khan, 2002; Hatta, 2009; Rathor, Rani, Akter and Azarisman, 2009; Nurullah, Iman, Makol-Abdul, Rahman and Noon, 2009; Husain, Hashim, and Rasli, 2008; Loh, 2008; Wong, 2008; Hamzah, Md. Isa and Mohd. Janor, 2010 and others. Many people are beginning to look inward to seek answers about their lives (Parveen & Maqbool, 2009, as cited in Husain, 2009). They are approaching the core of their being and starting their spiritual walk with the divine.

In the context of psychotherapy, an increasing number of individuals are seeking relief not only for physical and emotional pain but also for spiritual well being which can bring meaning, purpose, and a sense of inner satisfaction in their lives. This is supported by research done by Rathor et al. (2009) in a tertiary care hospital in Malaysia, where 79 percent of the patients noticed increase in faith due to illness and thus wanted a religious counselor to help them. The study was illustrating a fact that every year millions of patients seek counseling from clergy or religious people for their well being. In 1992, the Gallup poll surveyed 1000 American men and women about the context to seek counseling or psychotherapy. In this survey, 81 percent of respondents indicated that they would want their spiritual values to be respected and integrated into the counseling and therapeutic process, while 66 percent of them would prefer seeing counselors who share their spiritual values (Apostle, 2011; Sperry, 2001). In several informal interviews with some of the counselors and psychotherapists in Malaysia, the researcher found that spiritual interventions are often applied in pastoral care and counseling with different religious ethnic groups, but it is rarely applied in secular psychotherapy and counseling practice. Efforts have been made to incorporate religious and spiritual ideas into counseling (Lartey, 2002). Counselors have looked for more effective techniques and tools that might allow the integration of religious and spiritual values in counseling (Yusmini, 2011). Thus, the act of incorporating the spiritual dimension in the counseling and psychotherapeutic process should be a legitimate part

of psychotherapy and counseling practice. The researcher believes that the secular counseling and psychotherapeutic approaches could most probably enhance personal spiritual awareness in counseling sessions in Malaysia. A number of studies worldwide, however, suggest that personal spiritual awareness can positively impact mental health, physical and emotional well-being.

The researcher would like to extend the meaning of spirituality by referring to some illustrations of the meaning of spirituality in the psychotherapy relationship. Len Sperry (2001) has stated that spirituality is one's searching for meaning and belonging and the core values that influence one's behavior. Spirituality is a personal experience in relation to transcending the ego and searching for the sacred (Pargament, 1997). It is in this depth of the soul that one discovers the inborn universal interconnectedness across time and relationships with the divine and with others. This means that a natural potential or energy is dwelling in the human being and this is where the authentic spirituality is grounded. Thus, whether one is traditionally religious or not, one is able to access the sacred, nourish the soul, and develop the spiritual life (Elkins, 2009, as cited in Sperry & Shafranske, 2009, pp. 131-141).

The Dalai Lama revealed that spirituality is something born from within, motivated by the human desire in transforming oneself, in order to enhance a better personhood (Stril-Rever, 2010). As the researcher has once gone through a tremendous spiritual transformation, as a therapist and as a client, the researcher believes in counseling and therapeutic work. The therapist or counselor is not only addressing issues which are brought up by the client, but is also experiencing the spiritual atmosphere with the client. By working so closely with the client, there is a spiritual transference and counter transference taking place. The core of the inner qualities of the therapist / counselor or the client such as love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness or a sense of responsibility and sincerity indeed helps to change oneself at a

deeper level. Sometimes, it is amazing to see oneself being transformed in such a powerful way. The researcher is even overjoyed by the changed development shown by the client. Furthermore, the spiritual experiences in self-integrating processes are long lasting and it would definitely help both the therapist and the client become a better spiritual being. This dissertation is an opportunity for the researcher to show that the spiritual dimension in the psychotherapeutic process is real and sacred; it will give a lasting and good impact to the client as a starting point to build up a solid base in advancing spiritual growth.

From the perspective of the transpersonal psychologies, Charles Tart states that if there is a real spiritual dimension linking us, so that we are all brothers and sisters in some profound and loving way, then we have a vital basis for creating peace in the world and genuinely caring for each other's welfare. We would therefore be rich in a much more important way than in the material dimension and these riches will transform our world into a better place (Tart, 1992). Husain (2007) wrote that "spirituality is the basis of our religions and philosophical systems. It is the core of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and all other religions. It is also the core of every thought system in modern physics, atheism, humanitarianism and metaphysics. Spirituality builds upon personal psychology and well-being for happiness, unity and peace" (p. 3). As one looks around the world, one may see the influence of many outstanding changers of the world such as Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr., Rabbi Harold Kushner, Gandhi and the Dalai Lama amongst others. All of them had their own strong and in-depth spiritual concerns that transcend cultural barriers. Their deep faith in the real presence has given them the zeal to spend their whole life with honor and respect for human life.

The researcher believes for those who are well known with their charitable act, they too embrace the zeal of the true faith in which they are gifted with an extraordinary

prudence. The researcher believes counseling and psychotherapy is one of the tools to help people to transcend in order for their inner zeal and power to emerge. In one of the researches in the psychotherapy domain, Bonnie K. Lee (2001) has revealed that spirituality is an important and salient element. He pointed out that, through psychotherapy, congruence is realized when clients manage to associate their inner parts with the center self. The new self of being is able to manifest humanity's essential truth, which is the manifestation of the divine in the world respectively. Congruence reconnects and brings into harmony elements in the intra-psychic, interpersonal and universal-spiritual dimensions of the person.

When the researcher was doing her Masters degree in counseling, she was attracted to psychology as a part of her quest to understand herself better. When the element of psychology and spirituality converged, it was touching on the core of her being. Since then this meeting part of psychology and spirituality has been nurturing the researcher toward wholeness. The mechanism of moving toward wholeness has been enhancing the process of self-introspection and soul searching. The researcher became convinced that allowing the inclusion of spiritual elements in counseling and psychotherapy is actually facilitating the counseling and psychotherapeutic process, which would help clients to enhance the self awareness and self betterment process. As the researcher has encountered some clients with spiritual awareness, she found that when she used secular counseling and psychotherapeutic approaches, the clients move further toward the development of this psychotherapeutic process, their ability to connect and integrate all the main parts of the body, namely the thoughts, physical fitness, emotional expression, psychological reaction and spiritual well being will help the clients to touch the core of their being. On seeing the outcome of spiritual intervention onto the counseling and psychotherapeutic process, the

researcher is confident and convinced that both spiritual discipline and work are crucial elements to arrive at a holistic way of life and to achieve wholeness.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Increasing interest among people seeking spirituality and religious consolation has extended the attention of research connecting religion, spirituality and health in modern psychology (Cunningham, 2011). Evidence has shown the important role of spirituality in treating medical and psychological conditions (Richards & Bergin, 2007). Surveys have revealed that approximately 30 to 50 percent of psychotherapists are members of one of the theistic world religions such as Judaism, Islam and Christianity (Richards & Bergin, 2007). These therapists believe in God, and use spiritual interventions in their professional practices (Richards & Bergin, 2007). An emerging trend in Malaysia incorporates religious or spiritual approaches into counseling practice from an Islamic perspective. The psycho-spiritual eclectic approach that integrates religious and spiritual values is being employed in the Islamic Malaysian counseling setting. Thereby, the Muslim clients might experience a sense of connectedness with Allah, and their spiritual values are related to Islamic faith (Khairunisak & Mohamed Sharif, 2013; Khalid, 2008; Nik Rosila, 2013; Othman et al., 2011; Yusmini, 2011). Furthermore, pastoral counseling has long been established in Malaysia. It is practiced among the Christian community, whereby its basis is grounded in Christian beliefs and rites for the well-being of the clients (Lartey, 2002). Although some research and discussions have been made to integrate the religious or spiritual perspective in therapy (Khairunisak & Mohamed Sharif, 2013; Othman, Iqbal, & Rahmat, 2011), there is a lack of literature on employing secular counseling approaches to enhance personal spiritual awareness in counseling sessions in Malaysia (Yusmini, 2011). Sperry (2001) on the other hand has

incorporated the spiritual dimension in clinical practice without using a specific religion in his approach. He has illustrated several spiritual disciplines, practices and techniques appropriate for use in the context of psychotherapy and counseling. He also described four different approaches -- psychodynamic strategies, cognitive behavioral strategies, focusing strategies and systemic strategies -- in his spiritual-oriented interventions with individuals and couples.

In Malaysia Wong (2008), stressed spirituality as the motivational emotional source for an individual to connect with a higher being in developing feelings of well-being, inner peace and life satisfaction. He emphasized the holistic approach, which addressed the person at every level, between the physical, mental and spiritual.

Although there is a lack of research and literature on enhancing spiritual awareness in counseling and psychotherapy in Malaysia, religious and spiritual perspectives have been a norm to enhance the well-being among Christians and Muslims in Malaysia. The researcher hereby has encountered great healing through spiritual awareness in the secular counseling setting and felt the need to raise spirituality among the people who seek therapeutic help in Malaysia, especially those who are not complying to Islamic value-based therapy or Christian pastoral counseling by using secular therapeutic approaches. The challenge in the local context therefore is that there is insufficient understanding of the secular approach to counseling and psychotherapy where spiritual awareness can still be addressed without reference to any particular religion. The existing literature also emphasizes and acknowledges the role of spirituality in enhancing a person's wellbeing; but there are insufficient studies dealing with the in-depth spiritual experiences in a secular approach to therapy or counseling.

Hence, the present study served to research the emerging spiritual experiences during secular psychotherapy sessions. In relation to psychotherapy approaches that could enhance the sense of spirituality, the researcher embarked from the perspective of

psychodynamics, cognitive-behavior, humanistic-existential and systemic traditions in the current study. A participant's sense of spirituality is a phenomenon that can appear at any time during the psychotherapeutic process. Different participants respond spiritually to different types of expressive, transpersonal therapy approaches (Richards & Bergin, 2007; Sperry, 2001). Therefore, the fore-mentioned expressive, secular transpersonal therapy approaches were used in the study.

The present research study is a qualitative study, which serves to highlight spirituality as a process variable in a secular psychotherapy approach that explored how placing emphasis on the client's evolving transpersonal spiritual process during therapy will result in positive impact upon the client's holistic well-being. The researcher in the present study explored the lived experience of the therapist as well as the clients in therapy, which took spiritual values into account, awakened insights and clarified meanings in the transpersonal realm.

By engaging in heuristic study, the act of indwelling into spiritual experiences in therapy enhances understanding of insights and meanings where tacit knowing operates behind the scenes (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). The framework in the psychotherapeutic process allows the therapist and the client to explore and to examine their spiritual experiences with an awareness of the inner processes at work.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The element of spirituality is a major concern of the Malaysian education system to develop and produce a holistic and balanced individual (Abdul Rahman & Ahmad, 1998). Nevertheless, there is a gap in enhancing the spiritual development domain (Hamzah, Md. Isa, & Mohd. Janor, 2010); this is not only in the educational practice but also in the practice of counseling and psychotherapy as well. The situation is such

probably due to the notion of the Malaysian context that religious and spiritual issues are sensitive topics and it may create disharmony in our multicultural society (Mohd. Jaladin & Amit, 2008, as cited in Husain et al., 2008). Moreover, ethnicity is real and needs to be acknowledged (Mohd-Noor, 2008). Despite the situation, the researcher believes that sensitivity and willingness to interact between the therapist and the client can enhance mutual trust in the counseling room. Thereby, the researcher would like to take the opportunity of this research to present a salient fact that spirituality is an important aspect in the practice of psychotherapy. Relationally, the purpose of this study is to explore the therapist and client's spiritual experiences in an in-depth manner, and spirituality is treated as a component of the psychotherapeutic process. It is aimed at finding the underlying meanings of spiritual experiences (Moustakas, 1990).

In accordance with the researcher's practice and identity as a therapist, spirituality is a core of the researcher's existence and it is intertwined with all aspects of the whole being. This is illuminated with the researcher's concept of connectedness of inner sphere and the bodily manifestation of existence and activity. Spirituality within the researcher / therapist will be the hallmark of this research, specifically on the researcher's lived experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. This study is qualitative in nature and the researcher has intentions to further explore and disclose spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process.

First, the study of spirituality in the area of the counseling process is inevitable as there are an increasing number of cases in the counseling relationship which involve spirituality and transcendence experiences (Sperry & Shafranske, 2009). One needs to acknowledge that the spiritual dimension has an important role in restoration, maintenance and promotion of health, well-being and life satisfaction (Miller, 2010). As a psychotherapist, the researcher knew that the ultimate goal for the psychotherapeutic process is to achieve the recovery of the "Self" which constitutes the

healing and transformative construction. This study is to highlight the whole process of healing and transformation of the “Self”; it is believed to serve as a guideline to those interested in spiritual psychotherapy.

Second, the study of spirituality in the area of psychotherapeutic process is to acknowledge the individual as a whole person and that spiritual experience is intimately connected with inner reality and outer behavior. By using the heuristic inquiry approach, it will enable the researcher to explore the spiritual awakening that emerged in the psychotherapy journey and examine how spirituality can become a valid and integral part of the psychotherapeutic process. This study is to bring to light the spiritual identity in the psychotherapeutic process.

Third, this study is to explore the spiritual component in one’s beliefs, resources, experiences and behaviors in increasing wellbeing. Research into how individuals identify the meaning of life, its values and vision on earth will help those who are in the helping profession to have a better understanding of the individual’s intrinsic experiences and consequently to better construct a counseling or psychotherapy plan and goal in their future professional practice. It is hoped that this research on spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process will provide information to the therapist in becoming more effective to determine which therapy approach is the best in helping the clients.

Fourth, this study examines the unseen spiritual processes that strengthen the clients to cope, heal and grow during treatment. Barbour (1990), Griffin (2000) and Jones (1994) have revealed that spiritual dimensions are needed to enrich scientific understandings of human beings, of the origins and operations of the universe, and of health and human welfare. This study is believed to provide a ground for a more cultural, spiritual, transpersonal and theistic value framework to construct empirically in

counseling approaches and interventions, as there is much psychotherapy potential in this area that is yet to explore.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was undertaken to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the spiritual experiences of the participants and the therapist in the psychotherapeutic process.
2. To describe the relationship between the spiritual experience and the self of the participants and the therapist in the psychotherapeutic process.
3. To examine the process of integrating spirituality of the participants and the therapist into the psychotherapy sessions.

1.5 Research Questions

The primary research questions guiding this study were:

1. What are the participants' and the therapists' spiritual experiences in the counseling process?
2. How do the participants perceive and describe the experience of feeling connected with spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process?
3. What is the relationship between the spiritual experience and the self of the participant in the psychotherapeutic process?
4. What is the relationship between the spiritual experience and the self of the therapist in the psychotherapeutic process?
5. How do the participants and the therapist describe the process of integrating spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process?

The conceptualizations of spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process allow both theistic and non-theistic perspectives to play their role. Spirituality is an operating and evolving process within the inner self. It is a personal but integral component of a human person, and it involves the process of making meaning of a person's existence and life purpose. Spirituality works as a relational agent and it is connecting the person and the environment, the person and others, the person and the divine God, the higher power that connects one to other people. Spirituality provides a large framework whereby it can be found in humanistic and transpersonal psychotherapy. Hiles (2002) defines counseling and psychotherapy practice as an authentic participatory practice; it involves tacit knowing and heuristic dwelling in discovering the essence of spirituality; therefore all therapeutic counseling activity is transpersonal and grounded in spirituality. This research study involved the learning about: (a) What are the participants' and the therapists' spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process? (b) How do the participants perceive and describe the experience of feeling connected with spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process? (c) What is the relationship between the spiritual experience and the self of the participant in the psychotherapeutic process? (d) How do the participants and the therapist describe the process of integrating spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process? As a matter of fact, spiritual growth can lead to a transformation between the client and the therapist. Therefore, the evolving spiritual operation within the psychotherapeutic process is expected to serve as a foundation for promoting larger social change (Carney, 2007).

Benjamin and Looby (1998) reveal that therapists and counselors need to understand their own spirituality, in order to adequately utilize their own spirituality to positively impact the psychotherapeutic process, and provide relevant support and strength to their clients (Benjamin & Looby, 1998, as cited in Carney, 2007). Both Rogers and Maslow agreed that the counseling relationship between counselor and

client is the bond that nurtures and heals a hurting client. The most powerful component in counseling is one human person helping the other; it is the spiritual connection between the self of the counselor and the self of the client (Carney, 2007, p. 30). Carl Rogers (1995) explained that the “self” in the counseling interpersonal relationship would develop and strive for consistency. There is a drive toward self-actualization in every human person when it is nurtured by environmental forces (Purkey & Stanley, 1996). Hinterkopf (1998) emphasized the process of spiritual experiences in counseling. The spiritual experiencing process involves the counselor’s wisdom of intervening subtly onto the client’s vague and implicit psychological bodily sensation. Eventually the new positive explicit meanings would emerge and unfold; as a result healing took place and this could empower the client to the self-transcendent growth process. In this research study, spirituality is conceptualized as a psychotherapeutic process variable.

Creswell (1998) provided the rationale for choosing a qualitative research approach. He commented that the nature of the research question is focused on asking how or what in order to describe a particular phenomenon. In this study, the research questions ask “what is the relationship between the spiritual experience and the self of the participant in the psychotherapeutic process?”, “how do the participants perceive and describe the experience of feeling connected with spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process?” and “How do the participants and the therapist describe the process of integrating spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process?” thus making a qualitative approach appropriate.

Spirituality is a topic of great importance in the researcher’s life. The researcher is deeply connected spiritually both on a personal level and through the research study that she conducted. It is no doubt insofar that spirituality is seen as something personal, by utilizing a qualitative heuristic approach, the researcher who is also the therapist is

incorporating her “self” into the research inquiry in order to foster the research on spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process with increasing depth (Hiles, 2001; Moustakas, 1990). Furthermore, heuristic methodology enables the researcher to describe the phenomenon of spirituality in a manner that is true to the perspectives of the participants in this study, while it is also acknowledging the researcher’s relationship with the topic.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The present research study uses heuristic inquiry as the methodology to research spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. Heuristic inquiry is a form of research that focuses on exploratory experience. It is a method of research which particularly resonates with inquiry into psychotherapy related issues (Hiles, 2001). This is an approach which “appeared to be the most appropriate in respect of ethics and practicality” (Morris, 2011, p. 145) as the researcher is playing a dual role of both the therapist and the researcher. Besides that, this present research is employing secular psychotherapy methods that may enhance personal spiritual awareness in the therapy sessions. Moustakas (1990) describes this approach as:

“...a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge” (p. 9).

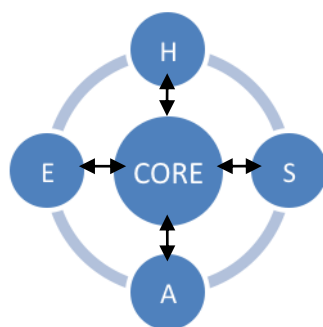
Heuristic research is unique in that the researcher is also the counselor (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010; Moustakas, 1990). It allows the researcher who is also the therapist to document her entire spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic

process. The dual role of the researcher and the therapist supports well the researcher's best interest in total understanding of the lived experiences of both the therapist and the participants. Hence, it is the purpose of heuristic research for the researcher's insights of her self-process to be included in the research questions and findings. This approach is an adaptation of phenomenological inquiry, but explicitly acknowledges the involvement of the researcher to the extent that the lived experience of the researcher becomes the main focus of the research (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010; Moustakas, 1990).

The journey of the spiritual experiences of both the therapist and client in the present research study is a transpersonal journey. It is important that the therapist is aware of her perceptions and feelings along with the clients' in relationship to the clients. As the therapist may forget to pay attention to her own process at either conscious or unconscious level, which may influence the client's experience; heuristic studies actually afford the therapist a means to take a very close look at her own process (Hiles, 2001; Moustakas, 1990). This in turn, helps the therapist to be more in tune with her biases, transferences and projections in the psychotherapeutic process. Hence, heuristic studies enhance the therapist's awareness in order to explore the role that spirituality plays in the lives of her clients. When transpersonal spirituality processes are experiences in the psychotherapeutic process, the therapist and client are at one point in the process travelling beyond earthly values, cultural existence and experience. It is enhancing a higher level of human development beyond the adult ego. At another point, the transpersonal experiences motivate human behavior and cause one to search for wholeness particularly through the avenues provided by religious or spiritual experiences that are close to selfhood (Cunningham, 2011). This is supported by Hiles (2001) that all transpersonal research involves the exploration and study of human experiences, it is depth psychology that led the personal experience to the psyche and collective unconscious.

1.7 An overview of the researcher's context of psychotherapeutic process that involves spiritual experiences

This research study is addressing spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. With reference to Figure 1.1, when the researcher addresses the psychotherapeutic process in this study, she is referring to the process that is centered on the subject matter – the self.



Key:

A: The Jungian based expressive arts therapy

E: Existential therapy and logotherapy

H: Hypnotherapy

S: The Satir systemic family therapy

CORE: The core of the being – the transpersonal self

Figure 1.1. The psychotherapeutic tools that enhance the self of the participants.

In the existential perspective of psychotherapy, the self is the center-point of a person's entire network of physical, social, personal and spiritual world relations (Van Deurzen, 2002). In the Satir systemic family therapy, the self is the deepest part of the being; it is where the true essence of one's existence dwells (Piddocke, 2010; Satir, Banmen, Gerber, & Gomori, 2006). As in logotherapy, the self is revealed when one has found one's own vocation in life, which provides one with an optimistic sense of ownership to one's being (Kang, Im, Kim, Song, & Sim, 2009). Whereas expressive arts therapy and hypnotherapy are used as the instigator to begin the process of inner

work, it is to touch the self. In hypnotherapy, although suggestions are being used to ease the problematic symptoms, they are also used to integrate the inner parts of the person that may bring healing and transformation to the self (Yapko, 2011). In Jungian expressive arts therapy, the goal of inner work is to organize and engage the consciousness and the unconscious in a way toward union (Singer, 1994). It is unifying the personality, giving it a sense of harmony and “oneness” (Hall & Nordby, 1999). Therefore, the psychotherapeutic counseling session is considered a time of authenticity when clients are given the opportunity to encounter and to come to terms with themselves in life (Van Deurzen, 2002). The opportunity to meet with one-self is quite similar to what Rumi has stated, “Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right-doing, there is a field. I will meet you there” (West, 2007, p. 2).

Between the first session and the final session, throughout the span of psychotherapy, many experiences will occur and they will be manifested in terms of feelings, thoughts, and various expressions. Some significant encountering also happened during this time; some of the expected experiences are: (a) discovering some psychological disturbances, (b) recognizing ambivalence about change, (c) acknowledging the resistance and the mismatch conflict, (d) struggling through the troubling mood, (e) accepting the real condition within and realizing the existential needs, (f) gaining awareness to do reframing and redefining on some disturbing notions, (g) adjusting to reconnect with the inner self, and (h) accommodating to make changes and gaining motivation for a better living (Blom, 2006; Van Deurzen, 2002).

All of these would happen back and forth, sometimes it happens concurrently, and at times it is overwhelming. The mantra of “No pain, No gain” perhaps is useful to encourage the clients to encounter their struggling situations meaningfully as they travel along the journey to further growth (Kinnier, Dixon, Scheidegger, & Lindberg, 2009). In between the process, clients will get familiar with the ways their beings work

(Moody & Carroll, 1998; Patterson et al., 2009). As the desire to get better is strong, the client will have the tendency to strive and make a change toward becoming less demanding, experiencing more freedom and independence with which the client will achieve a greater degree of inner comfort, self understanding and self acceptance, and self responsibility (Rogers, 1995). Sometimes, the process of becoming happens in the “here and now” when the therapist and the client are engaged with the interaction of the psychotherapeutic relationship. The psychotherapeutic process is invariably energized whenever the therapist and the client focus on the “here and now” (Krug, 2009; Yalom, 2009).

Furthermore, through the psychotherapeutic relationship, the therapist assists clients in developing a healing process toward self-awareness and self-realization. By reframing and evolving, clients will experience changes in their lives. Eventually, as Assagioli (1989) stated, the disquieting inner pressure motivates clients to begin their inner searching for the soul (Moody & Carroll, 1998). When this happens, clients may experience inner transformation of the Self. Therefore, the transpersonal self is initiated by inner searching, and it is developed through inner searching psychotherapy; eventually it is transformed and fulfilled by emotional and spiritual transcendence (Rowan, 2005). For some, the transpersonal self is achieved with the practice of meditation or contemplation. Others may use dreams, active imagination or expressive arts to engage with their inner work. The process of unfolding is a process of the here and now, within the mind, thoughts and emotions at every level of the conscious experience (Rinpoche, 2008, p. 246). For some, the process of examining consciousness is basically a time of prayer, a time of being with God, which will lead one to find the inner teacher or the kingdom of God within oneself (Aschenbrenner, 1972). Grey (1985) revealed that the higher spiritual reality is here and now, if only we can discover and enter it (as cited in Rinpoche, 2008).

When clients are doing inner searching, it is absolutely possible for them to find their transpersonal shadow (or a person's dark side). Doing work on this part of the client enables the client to come to terms with the shadow, befriending and owning the shadow. Acceptance of the shadow does not mean the clients are allowing this dimension to take control or to dominate their being, but it is simply acknowledging that this is a part of their human nature (Corey, 2009; Corey & Corey, 2002). The process of dealing with the shadow is an evolutionary journey. For many, that is where authentic spirituality takes place whereby clients apply spiritual exercise to break through the wall of conflicts and return home to the core of their being. One significant outcome of the breaking through process is the parts that have afflicted them may turn out to be the source of healing and growth (Johnson, 1989; Northcutt, 2010). This inner integration process thus motivates the client to adopt a holistic, real and progressive realization of the authentic inner self (Monbourquette, 2001). In this way, from the perspective of spiritual psychotherapy, spirituality is taking place respectively along the transformative psychotherapeutic process.

As the process of inner transformation reaches its maturation, individuals would experience a transcending connection with their inner self, between the individuals with other people and between the individuals with the Divine. The convergence between the transforming humanity and the authentic spirituality will serve as a platform for the transpersonal self to emerge. This is the beginning of the inner life in which the conscious mind is having a harmonious connection with the unconscious, which is the repressed characteristic of the conscious mind (Johnson, 1989; Snowden, 2010). As this relationship of the conscious and the unconscious continues to develop, the researcher considers this stage as the initial stage of individuation. A significant manifestation at this point will be that individuals are able to find their purpose and direction in life. Individuation in the context of this research study could serve as a starting point for

clients to engage much more fully with authentic spiritual exercises and activities as a way to experience enlightenment (Karasu, 1999; Singer, 1994). Spirituality thus is used as part of a flexible, multidimensional, integrative treatment approach that assists mainstream psychological perspectives and interventions (Richards & Bergin, 2007).

In fact, the researcher has found some reports and cases in the worldwide research that reveal the interdependence and the connection between the psychological and the spiritual, in which the two dimensions have enhanced growth, development and wellbeing in clients (Lines, 2006; Miller, 2010; Sperry & Shafranske, 2009). Basically, the psychological growth is fostering the spiritual growth or vice versa. Statistics have shown that an increasing number of people have acknowledged spirituality as a fundamental part of human existence (Moody & Carroll, 1998); spiritual and psychological dimensions are essential aspects that form human nature (Patterson et al., 2009). Thus, it is appropriate to conclude that the spiritual discipline and psychological work are necessary to get in touch with the inner self and to achieve wholeness.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

The following section presents some operational definition of terms of this study.

1.8.1 Spirituality

Spirituality is defined from the Latin root word *spiritus*, which means in breath, the essence of life or the life force. The infusion of spirituality to human beings is expressed through qualities such as inspiration, creativity, loving kindness and connection with others. Spirituality also can be defined as the courage to look inside one's self, and is trust to the extent of opening one's heart to the infinite. "Spirituality is

a word that has been used to describe the human need for meaning and value in life and the desire for relationship with a transcendent power” (Clinebell, 1995, as cited in Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999, p. 4). Hinterkopf (1997) illustrated that spirituality is not only a set of cognitive beliefs. She emphasized that transcendent growth processes are not limited to involvement with a divine being but instead may include transpersonal experiences, such as intuitive or mystical experiences, and involve activities and qualities such as service to others, faith, love, interconnectedness, and non-attachment, as well as struggling with existential questions. Hinterkopf stressed the interconnectedness between psychological and spiritual growth, commenting that a similar growth process is involved whether the content is spiritual or psychological (Hinterkopf, 1997, as cited in Carney, 2007). Pargament (2007) defined spirituality as “a search for the sacred” (p. 32). The sacred is the heart and soul of spirituality. Pargament and Mahoney (2002) have revealed the sacred in terms of the concepts of God, the divine, and transcendent reality, as well as other aspects of life that take on divine character and significance by virtue of their association with, or representation of divinity (as cited in Pargament, 2007).

The leaders of the Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) have developed the definition of Spirituality as:

The animating force in life, represented by such images as breath, wind, vigor and courage. Spirituality is the infusion and drawing out of spirit in one’s life. It is experienced as an active and passive process. It is an innate capacity and tendency to move towards knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness and compassion. It includes one’s capacity for creativity, growth and the development of a value system. Spirituality encompasses the religious, spiritual and transpersonal (“Summit Results”, 1995, as cited in Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999, p. 5).

1.8.2 Spiritual experiences

Hinterkopf (1998) defined spirituality by concentrating on the spiritual process.

Spiritual experiences are a subtle, bodily feeling with vague feelings that bring new, clearer meanings involving a transcendent growth process. This is in accordance with Gendlin's (1996) description of the spirituality growth process:

When a person's central core or inward self expands...it strengthens and develops, the "I" becomes stronger. The person -- I mean that which looks out from behind the eyes -- comes more into its own...One develops when the desire to live and do things stirs deep down, when one's own hopes and desires stir, when one's own perceptions and evaluations carry a new sureness, when the capacity to stand one's ground increases, and when one can consider others and their needs...One comes to feel one's separate existence solidly enough to want to be close to others as they really are. It is development when one is drawn to something that is directly interesting, and when one wants to play. It is development when something stirs inside that has long been immobile and silent, cramped and almost dumb, and when life's energy flows in a new way (Gendlin, 1996, pp. 21-22).

The spiritual growth process involves more life energy being released in the body; one may feel more fully present and whole, one may feel a larger sensation within, and is being able to accept and reach out to more parts of oneself, to more people, to more of life and to the environment.

1.8.3 Counseling process

According to Rogers (1995), psychotherapy is a relationship between the counselor and clients who enter therapy to improve their own functioning in order to accelerate their personal growth; it is a means to improve their coping with life for a better living.

Likewise, the counseling process refers to an interaction between the counselor and client during therapy; this interaction includes the intervention of the overt and covert thoughts, feelings and behaviors of both counselor and client. The process involves a shift from incongruence to congruence. In the course of developing a comprehensive assessment of the counseling process, the questions which we can ask are: “What helps people to change?”, “What goes on in therapy?”, “What works in therapy?”, “What treatment plan will best suit the client?” The counselor will be the one who can help to provide the answers.

Spirituality is considered an integral component in the counseling relationship and process by many mental health professionals. Corey (2010a) in his book addresses spirituality as an important component that can enhance the counseling process. He states that spirituality or religious values have a crucial part to play in human life and struggles; these values mean a lot when used to provide solutions for the client’s struggles. Fukuyama and Sevig (1999) too have considered spirituality as an integral component of the therapeutic counseling relationship.

1.8.4 Heuristic inquiry

Clark Moustakas (1990) developed heuristic inquiry as a process that begins with a question or problem which the researcher seeks to illuminate or answer. Heuristics is a way of engaging in scientific search through methods and processes aimed at discovery;

a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experiences (p. 15). There are six core processes and six phases in heuristic inquiry. The six core processes involve the identifying with the focus of inquiry, self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, in-dwelling, focusing and internal frame of reference. The six phases consists of initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis.

1.8.5 The Self

The organized, consistent, conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of the “I” or “me” and the perceptions of the relationships of the “I” or “me” to others and to various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions (Rogers, 1959, as cited in Pescitelli, 2007).

“Self” simply refers to one’s own interior world or subjective realities, which can be accessed by introspection, meditation, and self-reflection (Wilber, 2011).

The self is our life’s goal, for it is the most complete expression of that fateful combination we call individuality... (Jung, 1959).

The self is the true “I am” (Satir, 1963-1983, as cited in Banmen, 2008b).

1.8.6 The transpersonal self

The term transpersonal means, literally, beyond the personal, but does not deny the validity or importance of individual uniqueness. The transpersonal self, or “Self”, is a self-sense that transcends the egoic self-concepts and existential identifications. It may first come into awareness with the awakening of the inner witness or observer of experience that remains distinct from the contents of consciousness such as thoughts,

feelings, sensations, or images. As an integrated harmonious whole, it defends no boundaries and sees no separate parts. As limitless transcendental being, it partakes of infinite wisdom and compassion, understanding, allowing, and forgiving all things, without exception and without reservation. As a manifestation of absolute spirit, it is capable of unconditional love (Vaughan, 2000).

Transpersonal means that some sort of process is occurring in the individual that, in a sense, goes beyond the individual (Wilber, 2001, p. 7).

1.8.7 Connectedness

Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, and Bouwsema (1993) described the state of connectedness as occurring “when a person is actively involved with another person, object, group, or environment, and that involvement promotes a sense of comfort, well-being, and anxiety-reduction” (p. 293).

Virginia Satir (1963-1983) revealed connectedness as having full contact with another person. It is “a kind of experience [that] makes it possible for me to feel that I am connected with another form of life – another manifestation of life – yours, I regard life manifestation as the basis of what personhood is all about” (as cited in Banmen, 2008b, p. 182).

1.8.8 Therapeutic

The word therapeutic comes from Greek, meaning treatment. (a) Pertaining to the curative results of treatment. (b) Having some curative properties. (c) Characterizing any effective healing agent or procedure (Reber et al., 2009).

1.8.9 Awareness

Awareness is like the glow of a coal that comes from its own combustion; what is given by introspection is like the light reflected from an object when a flashlight is turned on it. In awareness a process is taking place in the coal (the total organism) (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951).

1.8.10 Mindfulness

Mindfulness means seeing things as they are, without trying to change them. The point is to dissolve our reactions to disturbing emotions, being careful not to reject the emotion itself. Mindfulness can change how we relate to, and perceive, our emotional states; it does not necessary eliminate them (Goleman, 2001).

1.8.11 Transcendence

In metaphysics, a state of consciousness that goes “beyond” normal waking experience, indeed, beyond material existence. Hence, a mental state assumed to be indefinable by ordinary means. Some claim to have achieved such. Some are skeptical. The empirical evidence supports the latter group (Reber et al., 2009).

1.8.12 Individuation

Individuation means becoming an “in-dividual,” and, in so far as “individuality” embraces our innermost, last, an incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming

one's own self. We could therefore translate individuation as "coming to selfhood" or "self realization" (Jung, 1959).

1.8.13 Self actualization

Maslow (1962) stated that:

What a man *can* be, he *must* be. This need we may call self-actualization...It refers to the desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming (Maslow, 1962, as cited in Cherry, 2008, p. 2).

1.8.14 The body-mind-soul/spirit

Body, in its general term, is the principal part of a thing: the primary, central portion of an organism, the soma of a cell, a coherent organized collection of tissue, an organ, a small structure within a larger one. In metaphysics, the body is the material substance of an individual (Reber et al., 2009).

Mind is the totality of hypothesized mental processes and acts that may serve as explanatory devices for psychological data. Mind is seen as the totality of the conscious and unconscious mental experiences of an individual organism (Reber et al., 2009).

The soul, as outside of the realm of theology, is: (a) An obsolete term for psyche or mind. (b) Popularly, the affective, emotional domain of one's personality as opposed to the analytical, intellectual aspects (Reber et al., 2009).

The soul is the seat of the mental and emotional complex that makes up our inner life. It is the translation of the Greek word psyche. Spirit, by contrast, is pure

consciousness, the Self, the true “I am” (Satir, 1963-1983, as cited in Banmen, 2008b). For Moore (1992) the soul is not a thing, but a quality or a dimension of experiencing life and ourselves. It has to do with depth, value, relatedness, heart, and personal substance.

Human beings exist at different levels. We are composed of atoms, of physical structures: bodies. We have functions and purposes – behaviors. We also have thoughts and feelings about these functions, these behaviors. This is our psychology, our mind. We may have symbolic value and significance that transcend either our material existence or our practical function. We may carry a powerful meaning. This is what the search for our spiritual self points to: the search for our own meaning and significance, at the third level (McManus, 2005).

1.8.15 The Shadow

The shadow is everything we have driven back into the unconscious for fear of being rejected by people who played a determining role in our upbringing (Monbourquette, 2001). The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspect of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance. Indeed, self-knowledge as a measure frequently requires much pains-taking work extending over a long period (Jung, 1959, as cited in Singer, 1994).

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has opened the platform in addressing spirituality in the counseling practice. Many mental health professionals have revealed that spirituality is an integral component in the counseling relationship and process. The present research study is highlighting spirituality as a process component in the psychotherapeutic process. It is exploring the lived experience of the therapist as well as the clients in psychotherapy. The literature regarding the work of spirituality as a process component will be addressed in the next chapter. There will be more empirical evidence supporting the fact that spirituality is important for creating significant change in the psychotherapeutic process.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As described in chapter one, this research study is emphasizes the client's evolving transpersonal spiritual experiences during psychotherapy. It is also focusing on the transformative aspect of the therapist's spiritual experiences. The research is qualitative in nature and is using heuristic inquiry to study the lived experiences of the therapist in therapy.

The literature of this chapter reviews the ideas and arguments of a number of mental health professionals, as well as, their academic research with spirituality. All the literature shares information on spirituality as a support for a new insight in the area of psychotherapy and counseling practice. The literature elicited great inspiration from the researcher to integrate several humanistic, transpersonal counseling approaches as tools to study spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. Furthermore, the literature is supporting the idea that spirituality as a process component is a potential resource in counseling and therapy (Carney, 2007). Besides, there were literatures in the west incorporating psychotherapy strategies in clinical practice (Richards & Bergin, 2007; Sperry, 2001). The researcher would like to embark on secular psychotherapeutic approaches in enhancing the client's spiritual process in psychotherapy in Malaysia. Hence, the exploration of spiritual experiences in therapy and counseling is worthy of further study.

2.2 Development of Spirituality in Psychology, Counseling and Psychotherapy

The 20th century has been a time for psychotherapists to absorb religious and spiritual perspectives into mainstream psychology, counseling and psychotherapy. Toward the end of the 20th century, a new development emerged, one using integrative and multidimensional approaches in psychotherapy and counseling. Spiritual techniques are being absorbed and integrated into mainstream psychotherapy which consists of the psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive, humanistic-existential and systemic traditions (Richards & Bergin, 2007).

Along with the multidimensional movement, the spiritual diversity began to find its way and gained momentum in psychotherapy and counseling. Fukuyama and Sevig (1999) have illustrated counselor-client interaction and process issues. They emphasized the counselor's ability to engage beyond a cognitive level and focusing on the being, rather than on saying or doing. The counselor's spiritual journey is seen as an integral part of the transformation process, and the counselor's usage of himself or herself is seen as a component in building rapport and trust with the client. The counselors who are well equipped with appropriate spiritual training or religious competency will provide an effective treatment to clients because their issues are better understood (Hage, 2006; Mazidah et al., 2014; Ongna, 1999). Besides the awareness of good self-care and professionalism, maintenance is also important in order to be an effective counselor (Puterbaugh, 2008). The counselor who is well attuned to the client's spiritual need may facilitate a genuine and fruitful therapy (Lewis, 2006). The literature is conveying the message of how significant spirituality is in therapy; spirituality when used wisely will develop a positive turning point for the clients.

In the area of existential perspective of psychotherapy, the counselors who hold firm to the belief of the existentialist will help their clients to expand their awareness to

take responsibility in making meaning of the circumstances in which they live, and to create personal life meaning with their own values and notions, and apply it to life conditions and their vocational choices (Corey, 2009; Hansen, 1997, as cited in Briggs & Rayle, 2005). The outcome of the process is similar to the spiritual characteristics of logotherapy where the self-transcendence happens in human experience. Since the meaning in life is unconditional, it depends on the human person to discover the meaning of one's own mission in life (Frankl, 1985; Lewis, 2011). The heuristic method of this present study probably an approach that emphasized the recreation of the lived experiences that helped clients who have undergone and experienced the transpersonal psychotherapeutic process, in which they experienced something that has a meaning in life and this motivated them to improve their lives.

Furthermore, since the 1970s, transpersonal psychology has opened up new areas of comprehension and creativity in contemporary psychology. It has focused attention on the existence of the aspects of personality action that transcend standardized orthodox ideas about the nature of the human psyche (Cunningham, 2011). Transpersonal studies have their roots in humanistic psychology and the human potential movement of the 1960s. Increased professional acceptance of the role that spirituality and religion play in the counseling process is suggested by the inclusion in 1994 of a category for religious or spiritual problems in the DSM-IV (Kasprow & Scotton, 1999). Shapiro, Lee, and Gross (2002) addressed the essence of transpersonal psychology as a special state of consciousness that goes beyond the individual ego, self, personal identity; in short, it implies the existence of a deeper, true and authentic self. As the transpersonal perspective unites the spiritual with the psychological aspects of human experience, it addresses the integration of the whole person which includes the body, mind, emotion and spirit (Cunningham, 2011). The techniques of active imagination and creative visualization can be employed to acknowledge the activity of

the transpersonal self or the inner self which might uncover the nature of the psyche (Malchiodi, 2005), where its practical employment can be found in chapter four in the present study in which it can probably serve as a future reference for those interested in spiritual psychotherapy and counseling.

Whereas, in the counseling professional practice, the American Psychological Association's "Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists" (APA, 2003b) has supported the movement of training for spiritual and religious competency. Thereby, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards has considered and incorporated spirituality into counselor training programs since 2001 (Briggs & Rayle, 2005; CACREP, 2009). Various authors such as Burke et al. (1999), Briggs and Rayle (2005), Mazidah et al. (2014) and Pargament (2007) have expressed their concern to include spirituality in counselor training programs. The counselors need to understand the similarities and differences between spirituality and religion. Basically, spirituality is considered a more personal, deeper internal process that connects with the universe and a transcendent force (Briggs & Rayle, 2005, pp. 64-65; Clinebell, 1995, as cited in Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999, p. 4); whereas religion is viewed as a more social process that involves the worlds' major religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam (Miller, 2010; Richards & Bergin, 2007). In the transpersonal realm, spiritual, religion and culture elements may embody the self and give momentum to the process of reorganizing the fragmented self (Laughlin, 2013).

In Malaysia, Tan (1994) has posited that therapists need to avoid religious issues such as misusing the client's resources (e.g., prayer), and therapists are asked to focus on the therapeutic goals instead of religious goals although there will clearly be an overlap. This is to prevent therapists from imposing their beliefs or values on the client. Although increasing numbers of psychotherapists in this country are aware of

incorporating spirituality and prayer in their professional practice (See, 2009), the essence of spirituality is rarely being considered in the field of psychology education and counseling training. The contribution of the present study most probably is in exploring and highlighting the spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process which enriches the understanding of the essence of spirituality. The findings of this study may probably help develop the use of spiritual counseling approaches in psychotherapeutic and counseling training in Malaysia. Therapists or counselors may need to equip themselves with the capabilities to provide adequate spiritual worldview data in the informed consent process. Nevertheless, it is still a challenging task for therapists and counselors in this nation to deal with the spiritual and religious inclined clients.

In over two hundred years of existence of the different ethnic groups the people in Malaysia have embraced various religions and beliefs to form a multiracial and multicultural identity community. The religions concerned are Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Sikhism and others. As spirituality is the basis of our religions and philosophical systems, it is the core of every religion and thought system in modern physics, atheism, humanitarianism and metaphysics. Spirituality builds upon personal psychology and wellbeing for the people in Malaysia (Husain, 2007). Since the beginning of this century, there have been attempts to integrate therapy from a religious or spiritual perspective (Abdul Kadir, 1994; Yusmini, 2011). The pastoral care approach based on Christian beliefs has been offered within the Christian faith community (Lartey, 2002). Spiritually integrated value within the Islamic context was widely implemented among Muslims in Malaysia (Yusmini, 2011). Husain et al. (2008) and Pramanik (2002) describe the main meaning of religious spirituality is to do something for God or the Higher Power. People regarded their lives as meaningful in this world because they stayed connected to their spiritual life (as cited in Husain et al.,

2008). Many have sought to advance the Islamic spiritual intervention among Muslim clients in counseling. The Islamic psycho-spiritual approach is effective in improving clients' wellbeing (Khairunisak & Mohamed Sharif, 2013; Othman et al., 2011).

Particularly cognitive therapy from the Islamic psycho-spiritual perspective is used to strengthen clients' self confidence (Nik Rosila, 2013). Apart from this, the psycho-spiritual approach of Sufism which consists of the concept of God, of self and of life and death, is absorbed into the drug rehabilitation therapy (Khalid, 2008). Thereby, there is a connection between spiritual experiences and the higher power. The spiritual capability of an individual indeed plays an important role in making a human total (Samah & Isa, 2009). Although spirituality is considered something shared by the people in Malaysia –both Muslim and non-Muslim, there is a lack of literature on employing counseling approaches to enhance personal spiritual awareness in counseling sessions. By researching spirituality as a process component with clients holding a different spiritual outlook, the present study has opened a platform to enrich the understanding of how secular psychotherapeutic approaches enhance the transpersonal spiritual process in therapy sessions. As the effort of establishing secular counseling models to raise spiritual aspects in counseling is still in the slow growing stage (Yusmini, 2011), the idea of integrating spirituality in the counseling process may provide a framework to suit the needs of spiritual based counseling in Malaysia.

2.3 The Secular Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy

One secular approach to psychotherapy of the current research study is using the psychotherapy perspective of the Satir Systemic Family Therapy. Lee (2001) described that the spiritual significance of Satir's Model can be revealed in the reconnection of the self, others and one's spiritual essence when the healing and restoring of humanity's

wholeness is taking place. This means that contacting a person's spirit is central to Satir's therapeutic work. This concept is also the essence of the therapeutic process in the present study. Making contact involves energy of dynamic source, which will bring multiple dimensions of the human being into alignment and harmony that brings restoration of health congruence. Congruence is relating to the realm of spirituality and universality as connecting with the "universal life force" that creates and facilitates growth in humans and other natural forms.

The evolvement of spirituality in psychology that involved the healing power of the mind has been encouraging therapists to use hypnotherapy as the counseling tool to restructure and reframe mental imagery in the unconscious mind that would effectively help clients heal during the psychotherapeutic process. Hypnotherapy is directly accessing to the unconscious and working within the psyche that brings restoration to the inner self (Zimberoff & Hartman, 1999). Spiritual experiences have been proven to cause beta wave increases, and thus the mind's awareness grows broader and more unified. It is believed that through the filter of the self, the mind reaches its state of awareness (Rause, 2002; Tart, 1997). Although there are scarce cognitive therapy research and literature concerning the breakthrough or peak experience, the researcher would like to suggest an alternative therapy that is working well with the breakthrough experience -- which is the Jungian based expressive arts therapy and Transpersonal Psychology. Both approaches could serve as a complementary counseling tool to cognitive therapy. Though cognitive therapy does not claim to be a holistic experience vast enough to address the human mind, body, soul and spirit, it is certainly an effective tool for healing when working with spiritual issues. As cognitive therapy is assumed to be useful, Spinelli (2008) reveals that when clients are in the course of struggling and resolving their personal issues, they are actually experiencing a paradigm shift of their worldview's resonances. Thereby, cognitive reconstruction could serve as an applicable

resource for the counselor in the current study to elicit spiritual elements from the mental imagery when treating the clients.

The use of expressive arts such as drawing, journaling, clay, sand play, drama and evocative music to allow the expression of emotions and experiences through color, forms, sound and movement was well supported by Anderson and Braud (2011), Grof and Grof (1989) and also Malchiodi (2005). The compatibility of cognitive therapy and humanistic approach supports well the therapeutic approaches of the present research study, which is used to research spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process. The combination of hypnotherapy and expressive arts therapy in the technique of life size portrait appears to be effective in helping clients engage with inner searching (as shown in the description of the transcript in chapter four of this study).

This research study involved and encouraged the clients to go through the process of self-searching and seeking spiritual wisdom. One popular method of self-searching is mindfulness. Mindfulness provides a scientific approach to the inner work where one can draw insights and connect with the health of the mind. Loh (2008) describes mindfulness as a powerful tool for spiritual awakening. It is a state of awareness when one is attentive to what is happening around in the present (as cited in Husain et al., 2008). When one is mindful, one is cultivating an attitude of acceptance that provides a means of detaching from focusing on problems. There will be little breathing room for unpleasant experiences (Barr, 2011; Gerber, 2009; Yapko, 2011). Furthermore, mindful awareness produced a powerful tool for developing emotional wisdom, where it is focusing on repairing maladaptive emotional habits. The cultivating of this emotional wisdom helps one to enlighten the spiritual psychic within (Chopra, 2014; Goleman, 2001). The literature has inspired the therapist to use mindfulness and the self in the wider context. It has drawn the therapist to explore and integrate several therapeutic tools to help the clients' self to emerge in their journey of

growth in the therapy setting. Through the practice of mindfulness, the clients will learn to be aware and cope with their mistakes, and tend to be more careful in handling themselves in order to have a clearer picture of their purpose on earth. The study reveals the effectiveness of the combinations of the secular psychotherapeutic approaches in enhancing one's spirituality. The more effective these approaches are, the more it allows the emergence of spiritual experiences. The stronger the integration of the personality, the more readily are the unconscious elements assimilated and the more fruitful redemption of the past will be (Whitmore, 2004).

2.4 Spirituality in Counseling and Psychotherapy

The idea of engaging spirituality into counseling is a potentially important aspect that is supported in theoretical and conceptual literature. Fukuyama and Sevig (1999) illustrate that spirituality is valuable as an integrated part in an in-depth counselor-client relationship. All of which include the experiences of transformation, feeling scared but also free, responsibility for self, feeling present, taking risks, and realizing that one cannot go back to one's previous ways of being. The connectedness of the counselor and client fosters the component of compassion, forgiveness and respect to help the counseling relationship moves toward the goal of achieving the human existence of becoming "who one really is" (Powell, 1995). Spirituality is described as something greater than the self, which is supported in Carney (2007) in her study that when the counselors or therapists are able to surrender themselves to this greater power for guidance, trusting the process, and acknowledging the sacredness of the counseling process, they are able to help the clients to recognize the strength of spirituality, the clients are capable of growth and change. The counseling process can be considered a spiritual pathway that may impact people spiritually as well as psychologically, socially

and physically (Pargament, 2007; Sperry, 2001). The presence of spirituality could enhance the clients to experience the higher power along the path of personal transformation and renewal. The results of these studies are providing the evidence to support the conceptualization of therapy as a spiritual process.

Besides that, this current study involved the journey of life changes from breaking through to coming home which is compatible to Moody's (1998) perspective of the transcendence of the soul, where the client focuses on the inner life of the soul. The client's consciousness is awakened to a higher transpersonal spiritual level whereby the client will commit to virtuous behavior and devote service to others. In addition to this assumption, Downing (2006) reveals that cognitive therapists should be able to work with religious or spiritual clients with the issues through the journey of transcendence like the call, the search, the struggle, the breakthrough and beyond. This is supported by the fact that cognitive therapy which involves spiritual and religious imagery has been used as spiritual resources of positive images in the form of visualization to heal clinical patients as well as assisting the process of change in psychotherapy (Pargament, 2007; Tan, 2003; Varma & Zain, 1996).

The researcher of the current study is aware of the various spiritual and religious traditions in this country. As Asian families are very much dedicated to their religious and spiritual traditions, counselors who are showing competency and sensitivity to spiritual issues are able to establish relationships and strengthen trust with their clients (Lukoff, 1998). Counselors need to identify the competency of knowing when to generalize and be inclusive and when to individualize and be exclusive in the multi-faith counseling (Kelly, 2005; Sue, 1998). At times, they need to apply dialectical thinking when encountering with clients of different cultures and different spiritual perspectives (Hanna & Green, 2004). Besides, counselors need to be willing to do a paradigm shift on the theories and approaches that are going to contribute toward the counseling

relationship and process (Ahmad & Mustaffa, 2011). Hence, the counselor's or therapist's self-reflection on spiritual beliefs and values are important, it is a way to create awareness of some self-prejudices, biases and stereotypes in order to safeguard the counseling and psychotherapy practice. Besides, the counselor or therapist needs to avoid making any assumptions about clients based on their religious affiliation alone but to make an effort to understand each client's unique spiritual worldview and belief. By minimizing the disclosure of one's own valuing system, the counselor or therapist is enhancing clients' spiritual values as a resource to assist clients to heal and grow (Lonborg & Bowen, 2004; Kelly, 2005; Pargament, 2007; Richards & Bergin, 2007). Nevertheless, the counselor or therapist may need to take wise actions so as not to overemphasize on spiritual tradition, morality and values until it affects the counseling process. The counselor or therapist should possess the wisdom to discern when is the right time to share the values most relevant to the client's problems.

In accordance with the literature, spirituality has been consistently revealed as an integral component of the counseling and psychotherapeutic process and relationship. Codes of ethics and values are being discussed as another important concern during the counseling process. Available literature also stresses on the spiritual educational training of counselors and therapists. Although there are scarce resources of literature on the use of spirituality as a process component in counseling and psychotherapy, the reviewed literature does illustrate some valuable concepts and ideas which can probably be used as guidelines in spirituality research in the counseling psychotherapeutic relationship and process.

2.5 The Theoretical Framework for the Research Study

This research study explores spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process. Thereby, it involves the process of spiritualization (Thompson, 1982). Spiritualization is associated with the stages of human growth that are connected with transpersonal theory. The transpersonal framework proposes that the stages of human growth, which involve experiences of connectedness and dynamics with related phenomena, are beyond the boundaries of the adult ego. All transpersonal approaches are enabling a higher level of human development by accessing and integrating developmental stages beyond the adult ego. Because of this connectedness, the transpersonal theories are dealing with matters characterized by transcendent states where qualities such as creativity, altruism, compassion, selflessness, wisdom and the feelings of connectedness with the universal human across cultures are widely reported (Kaspro & Scotton, 1999; Wilber, 2000).

One of the hallmarks of transpersonal approaches in the counseling and psychotherapeutic process is to address spiritual experiences. The ultimate goal of psychotherapy and counseling is not only to remove the psychological symptoms but also to enhance higher human development (Maslow, 1962, as cited in Kaspro & Scotton, 1999). One may employ hypnotherapy (the healing white light technique as shown in Appendix W) to enable the client to experience deep personal meaning in developing a higher human development into enlightenment (Tart, 1997; Yapko, 2011). Abraham Maslow, who has postulated the hierarchy of needs described that once the four basic needs are fulfilled, the clients are able to move toward self-actualization. In order to move toward the domain of self actualization, the construct of the self plays an important role by constantly evolving, having the internal mechanism to heal and grow as individuals and eventually incorporates the self image into one whole self (Chopra, 2014). The self-actualizing clients are those who are able to tolerate and welcome

uncertainty in their lives, have acceptance of themselves and others, spontaneity and creativity, a need for privacy and solitude, a capacity for deep and intense interpersonal relationships, a genuine caring for others, a sense of humor, an inner-directedness and the absence of artificial dichotomies within themselves. The self-actualizing clients reaching this level are advancing into the realm of spiritual values and they may experience peak moments of joy and experience times of being one with the universe (Corey & Corey, 2002).

In terms of this research study, the therapist used the humanistic-existential approach to reinforce the position in treating clients, helping them to develop their confidence and improve their self-esteem. When the clients' self esteem increased, they started to be attentive and begin to comprehend the meaning and purpose in life. The clients who possessed self-understanding were those who were free to desire, to choose, to act, to create their own value and personal life meaning, to change and apply them to their own life condition. These were the clients who own their life (Frankl, 1986; McManus, 2005). They were taking up their existential responsibilities and they were in control of their lives, their feelings and their selves (DiLorenzo, 2009; Pitchford, 2008; Yalom, 1980). Self-integration was enhanced when the ownership of oneself was developed thoroughly (Powell, 1995). Meanwhile, psychotherapist Emmy Van Deurzen (2002) says that there are four dimensions of a human being, namely physical (body), social (ego), personal (self) and spiritual (soul) domains. The spiritual world is the domain of experience where the clients can make meaning and make sense of things for themselves.

Carl Jung, as one of the pioneers in humanistic psychology, has legitimized the spiritual approach to deepen the development of the client's psychological process. He described that through the inner process work, clients are able to reconstruct themselves in more meaningful and adequate ways toward integration and individuation (Singer,

1994). When the clients are aware of the existence of the higher, transpersonal self, they can consciously draw upon its greater energy and understanding through the use of hypnotic suggestion, creative visualization, active imagination, meditation and dream work (Anderson & Braud, 2011; Cunningham, 2011). In the process of conversion, any changes taking place in a person is to connect with the spirit within the individual (Machinga & Friedman, 2013; Thompson, 1982). This resonates with Satir's model of the iceberg metaphor and Sperry's centrality of the spiritual dimension.

The spiritual aspect of the clients in the Satir Model is an important aspect of the counseling and psychotherapeutic process. As a person wishes to make changes in order to achieve meaning and purpose in life, allowing the internal change process to take place is a vital commitment to make. According to Virginia Satir (1988), "I consider the first step in any change is to contact the spirit" (p. 341). Her psychotherapeutic approach is based on looking beyond symptom and pathology to help a person activate his or her inner yearning to work toward health, which means to connect with a person's spirit or essence (as shown in Figure 2.1). This is the deepest part that the human is connected to a dynamic spiritual base which Satir calls the universal life energy or the Spirit of God. The integration process is working at all the levels (as shown in Figure 2.1); the counselor or therapist must examine all the parts and discover how the parts can support, help and love each other (Satir, 1988; Satir, Banmen, Gerber, & Gomori, 2006). Gomori and Adaskin (2009) reveal that the process of connection to the spirit is the way to discover the inner true self. In the deeper sense of spirituality, one who has experienced the transformation of the self may possess the phenomenon of "us-ness" which involves the mega relationship of people, nature and spirituality (Bentheim, 2005).

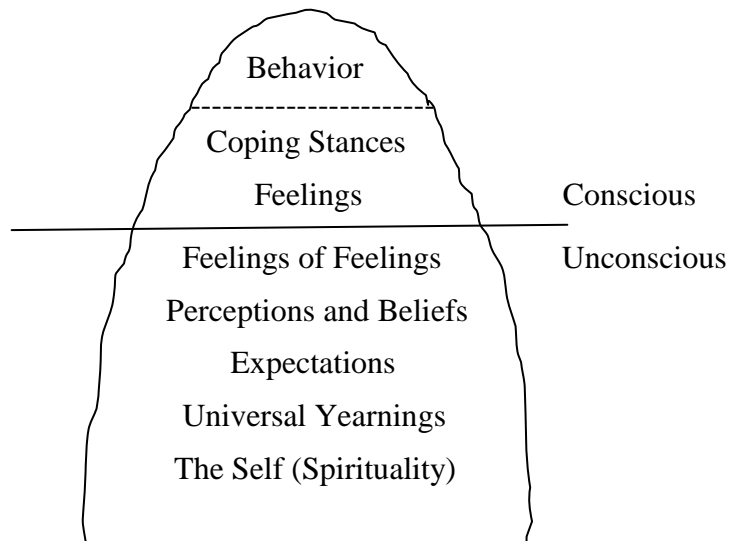


Figure 2.1. The Satir iceberg metaphor (Satir, Banmen, Gerber, & Gomori, 2006, p. 196)

Meanwhile, Sperry (2001) posited that the spiritual dimension is the core and foundation to the other dimensions of a person's experiences, namely psychological, social, moral, somatic or biological (as shown in Figure 2.2). The spiritual dimension expresses the beliefs, effects and behaviors that are connected with the basic spiritual desire for self-transcendence that is normally experienced by everybody. This model is addressing healing in a holistic fashion by incorporating and integrating the spiritual dimension into the process of counseling, psychotherapy and treatment.

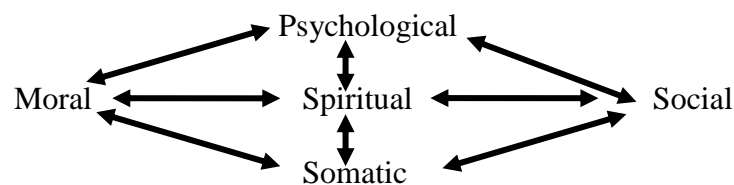


Figure 2.2. The centrality of the spiritual dimension and the inter-relationship of the five dimensions (Sperry, 2001, p. 24)

Moreover, in the process of counseling, transcendent experience continues to happen in the process of transformation. Perhaps by using the post-modern counseling and psychotherapeutic approaches, counselors and therapists may find more alternatives to work with clients who yearn for something beyond the material world. This is supported by Baranovich (2009) that expressive arts therapy serves as a way for clients to take their personal journey from their inner world and bring their personal soul work forward into enlightenment. It allows their inner psychic material to move and evolve out from within them, in order to be acknowledged and honored, then finally brought home for integration (Baranovich, 2009, as cited in Husain, 2009, pp. 83-93). In a deeper level of transformation, it is the archetype of the inner self manifesting the process of conversion in reaching the individuation state (Moore, 1992). The beginning of individuation is the beginning of consciousness. Individuation and consciousness go hand in hand in developing the personality (Hall & Nordby, 1999; Jacobi, 1973). Jung (1959) has set forth the basics of the individuation process as:

Individuation means becoming a single, homogeneous being, and, in so far as individuality embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's self. We could therefore translate individuation as ... self-realization (Jung, 1959, as cited in Singer, 1994, p. 137).

As psychology and spirituality are integrated in a human person, there will be an awareness of the inner self. Vaughan (2000) illustrates that the transpersonal self may first come into awareness when one is awakened by the inner experience of consciousness such as thoughts, feelings, sensations or images. The transpersonal self is discovered and revealed by turning inward. One of the means of seeking the self within is through mindfulness practice, meditation and contemplation; knowing oneself in depth cannot be attained by searching outside of oneself. The procedure and value of inner searching is affirmed not only through in depth psychology but also in every

major spiritual tradition. In Christianity: “The Kingdom of God is within.” In Buddhism: “Look within, thou art the Buddha.” In Siddha Yoga: “God dwells within you as you.” In Hinduism: “Atman (individual consciousness) and Brahman (universal consciousness) are one.” In Islam: “He who knows himself, knows his Lord” (Vaughan, 2000, p. 40). Thus, the process of integrating the humanity and spirituality of oneself as a part of the goal of individuation is to experience most deeply the being as such, to accept and affirm it.

On the whole, the theoretical framework will be the basis for the discussion on data collection and data analysis in this research study. This theoretical framework is applied to a larger level in the present study whereby the therapist’s spirituality is connecting and incorporating with the spirituality of the clients. The process of connectedness within the development of spiritualization in this study involves the domain of experiencing a person’s humanity as well as the person’s spirituality in the therapeutic process. It is an opportunity for the therapist to apply integrated psychotherapeutic approaches with spiritual resources to facilitate the person’s relationship with the sacred. Hence, the psychotherapeutic process in the present study appears to provide a systematic spiritual psychotherapy framework to fulfill the needs of spiritual based counseling in Malaysia by using secular psychotherapeutic approaches.

2.6 Heuristic Inquiry Approach in Research

Heuristic methodology is a qualitative research method in the field of psychological, humanistic and sociological research (Kleining & Witt, 2000). Moustakas (1990) described heuristic research as a method of personal experience that plays an essential role in depth psychological research and theory. The nature of the heuristic inquiry approach suits the researcher’s perspective to do research on the spiritual experiences in

the psychotherapeutic process. It is the self of the researcher being present throughout the process of searching and discovering the nature and meaning of experience, which brings to further investigation and analysis. Heuristic journey echoes the nature of tacit knowledge and it takes time to reveal the knowledge inside of the person, as Gauss (1777-1855) has stated, “I have had my solutions for a long time but I do not yet know how I am to arrive at them” (Polanyi, 1957, p. 102).

Heuristic methodology allows the researcher to make sense of phenomena in terms of meanings by bringing in one’s experiences. It encourages the researcher to search, to explore and to pursue a creative journey that begins and ends with the researcher’s internal discovery; ultimately it helps the researcher to unfold one’s inner being and uncovers its direction. Heuristic methodology can be illustrated by using the seven concepts of the processes: (a) identifying with the focus of inquiry; (b) self-dialogue; (c) tacit knowing; (d) intuition; (e) indwelling; (f) focusing; and (g) the internal frame of reference (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010). Heuristic approach is a wonderful qualitative research methodology that enhances a personal journey toward tacit knowing. It is providing the clients with a pathway to access their creative self. It is also providing an understanding of access to research on spirituality to a deeper level whereby the clients experienced a developmental spiritual growth through the journey of transformation and integration in the counseling process (Lo, 2011; Moskovici, 2006). This approach allows the dual role of the researcher as the therapist to explore the positive impact of transpersonal spiritual phenomena upon the clients in psychotherapy (Hiles, 2001; Morris, 2011; Moustakas, 1990). It challenges the researcher in the present study to utilize her creativity and self introspection to gain deeper understanding, and interpreting the significance and meaning of human experience in the psychotherapeutic process. This takes the researcher further to examine her own biases, transferences and projections in the psychotherapeutic process. Due to the interpretive

nature of human experience, heuristic approach should be able to acknowledge the inevitability of the researcher's subjective interpretation of information (Lo, 2011; Moustakas, 1990). Furthermore, the notion of researcher as therapist appeared to be considered in the light of the need to develop pluralistic approaches to qualitative research in counseling and psychotherapy.

Hiles (2001) states his support of heuristic inquiry being utilized in researching of the human in-depth experiences. He points out that heuristic inquiry is a research process that reflects Clark Moustakas's basic philosophy of "in every learner, in every person, there are creative sources of energy and meaning that are often tacit, hidden, or denied" (Hiles, 2001). Hiles (2001) resonates with Moustakas's (1990) six phases of heuristic inquiry and he indicates a seventh phase as well: (a) initial engagement; (b) immersion; (c) incubation; (d) illumination; (e) explication; (f) creative synthesis; and (g) validation of the heuristic inquiry. Heuristic approach is an appropriate design for transpersonal research. It is focusing on the importance of working with the heuristic process of others (the co-researchers), particularly the spiritual texts with the historical recordings of previous inquiry. All transpersonal research involves the exploration and study of human experiences that led the personal experience to the psyche and collective unconscious (Hiles, 2001). Therefore, the heuristic approach has a core role to play in the research into transpersonal and spiritual issues. This literature is an affirmation to the present research study to use heuristic inquiry approach as the best research methodology for this study.

The heuristic inquiry approach is not only an appropriate methodology for transpersonal research, it is also treated as a very appealing method to the practice of counseling and psychotherapy, particularly with respect to the use of the internal pathway of the "Self". The research question and the methodology of heuristics that flow out of inner awareness, meaning and inspiration will develop a verbatim that helps

the researcher to connect and get in touch with new discovery of the self and others (Moustakas, 1990). Hence, it is a method of research that resonates with inquiry into counseling and psychotherapy related issues (Hiles, 2001). By using the heuristic inquiry approach, the authentic spiritual experiences with an in-depth uniqueness are expected to be revealed in this present study. As it is a spiritually integrated psychotherapeutic process, spiritual intervention and methods would lead to meaningful change if it is indeed worthwhile.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature has shown the development and expansion of spirituality in psychology in recent years. Many areas still remain unexplored and these need attention within the counseling profession. The researcher finds that the present study is filling the gap in the existing literature since there was lack of literature on employing secular psychotherapeutic approaches to enhance personal spiritual awareness in the psychotherapy and counseling sessions in Malaysia. The unique incorporated usage of humanistic approach, namely the Satir systemic family therapy, existential therapy, expressive arts therapy and hypnotherapy when effectively conducted will nonetheless emerge as a strong component to address spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process. The current study can be considered a spiritually integrated psychotherapeutic research moving from theory to practical. It is an opportunity for the therapist to work on spirituality to help clients spiritually, psychologically, socially, and physically. It is also important to bring the experiences between two human beings into literature in order to convey the subtle interplay in the psychotherapeutic room where it has improved the life experiences of both (Bugental, 1995). As the study of spirituality is an in-depth search in the psychotherapeutic process, the usage of heuristic inquiry is best suited as a

comprehensive qualitative methodology for the entire expression of spirituality of the therapist and each participant that took part in the project. The research study is expected to show that spirituality can be enhanced in a conventional setting in which the spirituality of the clients is expressed explicitly. The interaction between humanity and spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process would create momentum in the participants' whole being to progress to the path of individuation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Spirituality is emphasized as a process variable in the present study. It is exploring how the transpersonal spiritual process enhances the clients' well being. It is also examining the therapist's engagement with transpersonal spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process. This chapter will focus on the research methodology by using heuristic inquiry to study the spiritual experiences of seven participants in the psychotherapeutic process. As the spiritual experiences were the one crucial area whereby the researcher would address in the therapy sessions, it will be an in-depth exploration of the subject matter and thus the methodology is qualitative in its approach to describe the phenomenon.

3.2 Research Design

A qualitative methodology of heuristic inquiry was employed in this research study. In relation to the subject matter, this study explored the spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. It was an effort to truly grasp some illustrations of the meaning, themes and patterns of spirituality, which derive from the relationship and the personal spiritual experiences of the participants and the researcher. By using this approach, the essence of experiences that involve the participants' and the therapist's emotions, reactions, perceptions of things and relationships are described inherently in detail.

3.2.1 Qualitative Design

Slife, Hope and Nebeker (1999) illuminate that theistic conceptualizations of spirituality are contextual, holistic and transcendent in nature; they encourage spiritual researchers to employ the qualitative research method because it allows researchers to examine and investigate spirituality in a more valid manner. Besides, qualitative designs provide a platform for researchers to better understand participants' inner worlds, or "lived experiences", thereby helping researchers to gain a richer in-depth insight into the participants' spiritual perceptions, beliefs, values, desires, emotions and practices. Furthermore, researchers will understand more fully how spirituality is intertwined with the participants' emotions and behavior.

When addressing qualitative research design, Creswell (2007) placed emphasis on the process of the research, flowing from philosophical assumptions, to worldviews and through a theoretical perspective, until the procedures that involve social and human problems; a true and clear understanding of the spiritual experiences could be derived from this approach (Creswell, 2007; McLeod, 2001). In the present study, the researcher wishes to describe the phenomenon and the meanings of spirituality that emerged in their natural settings in psychotherapy from this attempt.

3.2.2 Heuristic approach, design and concepts

Heuristic design and methodology was postulated by Michael Polanyi (1983) and developed by Clark Moustakas (1990). The word heuristic originated from the Greek word *heuriskein*, which means to discover or to find (Moustakas, 1990). The researcher must have an actual personal encounter with the phenomenon being researched. In the process of heuristic research, a particular phenomenon in the researcher's personal

experience is explored, developed and made known over time. In this case, the researcher would like to quote Clark Moustakas's (1990) heuristic inquiry approach as outlined in his book "Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology and Applications."

... a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge (p. 9). From the beginning, and throughout an investigation, heuristic research involves self search, self dialogue, and self discovery; the research question and the methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning, and inspiration. When I consider an issue, problem, or question, I enter into it fully ... I may challenge, confront, or even doubt my understanding of a human concern or issue; but when I persist in a disciplined and devoted way I ultimately deepen my knowledge of the phenomenon ... I am personally involved ... I may be entranced by visions, images, and dreams that connect me to my quest. I may come into touch with new regions of myself, and discover revealing connections with others (p. 11).

... an inner attention, a staying with, a sustained process of systematically contacting the more central meanings of an experience. Focusing enables one to see something as it is and to make whatever shifts are necessary to make contact with necessary awareness's and insights into one's experiences (p. 25).

In heuristic research, whatever presents itself to the researcher can be considered data. The researcher is both the object and subject of the study. The researcher goes back and forth from experience to witnessing and to experience the entire phenomenon. Heuristic research begins and ends with the researcher

(Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010). Heuristic methodology requires developing the capacity to be objective about one's self while delving deeper into subjectivity (Heron, 1996; Moustakas, 1990). As Moustakas (1990) has pointed out, "essentially in the heuristic process, I am creating a story that portrays the qualities, meanings, and essences of universally unique experiences" (p. 13). In such a way, the heuristic approach is beyond numbers; it is concerned with essences and meanings, not measurements and appearance; with quality and experience, not quantity and behavior (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010). Therefore, it is qualitative in nature.

In this study, through the process of refining again and again, narrowing the range of experiences on an essential and personal level, heuristic research will ultimately lead to the essence of the meaning on spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process. This is supported by Hiles (2001) in his statement: "Although heuristic inquiry is not of necessity transpersonal, it has a central role to play in the research into transpersonal and spiritual issues" (Hiles, 2001, p. 7). Besides, heuristic inquiry offers a systematic way of incorporating the self into inquiry methods, and some significant, exciting and urgent life events and extraordinary human experiences can be researched more closely (Moustakas, 1990).

The six core processes of heuristic inquiry as postulated by Moustakas (1990) are summarized in the following section; as cited in Hiles (2001; pp. 15 – 27):

1. Identify with the focus of the inquiry

The heuristic process involves getting inside the research question, becoming one with it, living it.

2. Self dialogue

Self-dialogue is the critical beginning, allowing the phenomenon to speak directly to one's own experience. Knowledge grows out of direct human experience and

discovery involves self-inquiry and self-exploration, it is an openness to one's own experience.

3. Tacit knowing

In addition to knowledge that we can make explicit, there is knowledge that is implicit to our actions and experiences. This tacit dimension is in the process of knowing and being; it underlies and precedes intuition that can guide the researcher into untapped directions and sources of meaning.

4. Intuition

The stage of intuition provides the bridge between explicit and tacit knowledge. Intuition helps the researcher to see things as wholes. The act of achieving integration, unity or wholeness requires intuition.

5. Indwelling

This involves the conscious and deliberate process of turning inward to seek a deeper, more extended comprehension of a quality or theme of human experience. Indwelling involves a willingness to gaze with unwavering attention and concentration into some aspect of human experience.

6. Focusing

Focusing is an inner attention; it is staying with, a sustained process of systematically contacting the central meanings of an experience. It enables the researcher to see something as it is and to make whatever shifts are necessary in order to make contact with necessary awareness and insight.

7. Internal frame of reference

The outcome of the heuristic process in terms of knowledge and experience must be placed in the context of the one's own internal frame of reference, and not some external frame.

As Moustakas has identified the core processes, he also developed an outline of basic phases for heuristic inquiry (1990, pp. 27-37). It is summarized in the following statements:

1. Initial engagement

The task of the first phase is to discover an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important and significant social meanings and personal, compelling implications. The research question that emerges lingers with the researcher, awaiting a disciplined formulation that will reveal its underlying meanings.

2. Immersion

The research question is lived in waking, sleeping and even dream states. All aspects of the researcher's life are becoming one within the context of the question. This requires alertness, concentration and self-searching. Virtually anything connected with the question becomes raw material and information for immersion.

3. Incubation

This involves a retreat from the intense, concentrated focus, allowing the expansion of knowledge to take place at a more subtle level, this is to provide room for the unconscious to enable the inner tacit dimension and intuition to clarify and extend understanding.

4. Illumination

This is a breakthrough process of awakening that occurs naturally when the researcher is open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition. It involves opening a door to new awareness, a modification of an old understanding, a synthesis of fragmented knowledge; new meaning is discovered.

5. Explication

This involves a full examination of what has been awakened in consciousness. The researcher's understanding of meanings is sharpened. The requirement in this stage is organization and a comprehensive depiction of the core themes.

6. Creative synthesis

Thoroughly familiar with the information, and following a preparatory phase of solitude and meditation, the researcher connects and puts the components, the core themes into the form of creative synthesis in the form of narrative account, a report, a thesis, a poem, story, drawing, paintings, among others.

Though there are limited references related to heuristic inquiry, with the scanty literature the researcher could find, the researcher is convinced that the use of heuristic qualitative research design is supported because of its ability to cast light on the phenomenon. Furthermore, it allows the participant and object in the research to extend their experiences during the process, and also to confirm what is known as well as to discover new meanings (Brown, 2008).

3.2.2.1 Why use heuristic method for this study?

The heuristic inquiry methodology was chosen in this research study to research transpersonal spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. It is the interest of the researcher to explore her own in-depth experiences as an important aspect of transpersonal psychotherapy before helping others. Heuristic method offers flexibility to the researcher to explore human processes, illuminating meaning and deepening understanding. It allows the researcher who is also the therapist to document her entire spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. Heuristic methodology of

research requires the researcher to play a “dual role” of both the therapist and the researcher (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 105-106). It is an approach which “appeared to be the most appropriate in respect of ethics and practicality” (Morris, 2011, p. 145). Although the dual role may provoke conflicting priorities, Moustakas (1990) takes this further, suggesting the emergence of both professional and personal enlightenment, expanding one’s knowledge and understanding by focusing on personal process. The dual role of the researcher and the therapist supports well the researcher’s best interest in total understanding of the lived experiences of both the therapist and the participants.

Heuristic approach is also a method of choice for transpersonal spiritual experiences. It enables the exploration of human experiences on spiritual phenomena for the therapist and the participants to uncover in the psychotherapeutic process.

This research study is re-searching on the human realm which entails some significant and extraordinary spiritual experiences, actions and expressions. It is the role of heuristic approach that is designed to interpret the experiences which uses the self of the researcher / therapist (Hiles, 2001). Heuristic approach is the best and only one choice whereby its approach propels transformative process for both the researcher (therapist) and the co-researcher (participants) to reflect and to engage with the lived experiences during psychotherapy, which is the main focus of the present study. When the researcher and the co-researcher have gone through the sequential processes of the in-depth spiritual experiences according to the heuristic method, the conceptualization of the entire spiritual phenomena that is emerging and illuminating during the psychotherapeutic process is much enhanced. Besides, heuristic method allows the researcher’s insights of the self process to be included in the research questions and findings. This is enabling the researcher to concentrate gazing on the spiritual experiences to the extent on recreation of the lived experiences whereby the researcher’s

quest of personal experiences can be fully depicted from the inner frame of reference of the experiencing person.

3.2.2.2 Outline applications of heuristic approach in the study

The heuristic approach provides the environment, time and space to the researcher to incorporate the researcher's experience with the experiences of the participants / co-researchers. The heuristic approach requires the use of the researcher's experience with the subject matter as a relevant source of data collection and interpretation (Thorne, 2009). It views the researcher as a participant and it allows all the participants to share their personal life stories, and they are treated as important co-researchers who are playing an integral part in this study (Moustakas, 1990, as cited in Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010, p. 1570). It is through the necessary flexibility within the framework that the researcher is able to design and create an overall depiction of the spiritual phenomenon in the psychotherapeutic process. This research design also allows the researcher to gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon relating to self and others during the process of psychotherapy.

Seven steps are involved in the heuristic approach utilized in this study. These steps will assist the researcher in reflecting on her thoughts and deepening the knowledge related to the phenomenon being researched. The heuristic approach, along with the researcher's engagement to the study is described in the following section.

When the researcher was engaging herself with counseling ten years ago, whether to address spiritual experiences in a psychotherapy session was always a question the researcher searched to answer. As the researcher encountered more and more cases involving spiritual elements in the psychotherapy session, she began to ponder on the spiritual experiences that had been emerged so lively during the

psychotherapy session. Therefore, she began to wonder, “Will there ever be the possibility to identify and acknowledge openly and officially the spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic session?” From then on, the researcher started to engage and identify with the focus of inquiry, the initial step of this journey to seek the answer. The researcher also realized that this will be the subject matter in which she is going to engage throughout her life if she is going to be seriously involved in therapy.

When the researcher recognized her connection with the phenomenon of spirituality, she began to “live” with it. At this point, she is able to engage and immerse in the phenomenon of self-dialogue, which requires being honest with herself about the subject matter. In the meanwhile, the researcher was reviewing her own spiritual journey, she felt confident and comfortable when she was pondering upon her own transformation process. In this second step of the process, the researcher is completely involved in the phenomenon. During the psychotherapeutic process, the researcher as the therapist allows the free flow of therapy, so that she is able to explore, feel, touch and tap the nature of the subject matter without prejudice and bias.

As the counselor engages fully with the participant therapeutically, it will involve an intense but healthy relationship between the therapist and the participant. This is the process of incubation, the third step of heuristics. Incubating encourages the subject matter to be explored in its own way, until the participant in therapy achieves awareness or new understandings. At some point, the process of incubating provides room and space for the therapist and the participant to understand what is dwelling in the unconscious mind in relation with spiritual experiences. Both therapist and participant may need a break or even a few moments of quiet withdrawal, away from the process of psychotherapy in order to mingle freely with the core of the subject matter. This is the period of inner workings where the researcher always finds herself energized by the peaceful sensation within her. She has realized that this is the life

force that is going to provide her the answer for the subject matter. The birth of new insights will lead to the next step, the burst of illumination.

Illumination is the fourth step of the heuristic approach. The insights that are present may look as if amazing; the researcher probably will notice some new quality emerged in a subtle manner. During this time, the researcher / therapist enters into the process of tacit knowing and intuiting; this is to illuminate themes and commonalities of the spiritual experiences between the therapist and the participant. Clarification on meanings, checking out the knowledge of the emerging spiritual experiences is carried out through the internal frame of references and through dialogues between the therapist and participant in psychotherapy. The most satisfying and intimate moment is when the therapist and the participant are consistent in agreeing with each other's understanding of the profound meanings, and the categories of spiritual experiences.

Further on, the researcher / therapist moves on to the fifth step of the heuristic approach, the explication. Explication requires a deep examination of the spiritual experiences that have emerged in the illumination period. According to Moustakas (1990), the heuristic researcher will engage in focusing, indwelling, self-searching, and self-disclosure in identifying the uniqueness of the spiritual experiences. During the process, the researcher may hear some contradicting ideas that challenge her ways of seeing things. An attempt to stay open while paying attention to the core of the experiences is needed. Once the subsidiary contradicts end, an interesting and comprehensive depiction of the phenomenon begins to form. Most likely new understandings, or new ideas, will be recognized. Besides, some corrections and modifications are made to suit the core of the spiritual experiences. In the present study, the participants were required to engage and identify the uniqueness of their spiritual experiences. When the participants have achieved new insights and found the meaning

in life, they are required to depict their new understandings into various expressions of self-depictions.

In the final step, the researcher will prepare a spiritual experiences questionnaire (as shown in Appendix O) and ask the participants to verify whether the spiritual expressions accurately describe their spiritual experiences. The expression that received less than two affirmative responses was not included in the final data analysis. Once the researcher firmly grasped the whole human spiritual experiences, she will need to reflect or meditate in order to gain inspiration to decide what depiction is the most appropriate way to present the core expression of the spiritual experiences. During the creative synthesis, the researcher / therapist integrates all the data from the explication phase into a creative depiction. The researcher may present the complete depiction of the spiritual experiences in the form of a narrative, poem, story, painting, or other form of creative expression (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010; McKay-Riddell, 2006; Moustakas, 1990).

Lastly, when the researcher finished the composite depiction of all the co-researchers / participants' stories, the researcher met with the participants and asked them to look at and read their stories and elaborate on whether the stories indeed depicted their spiritual experiences.

As the researcher has gone through the search for meaning upon spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process, she may need to consider and take into account the validity of the research study. Moustakas (1990) quotes Bridgman (1950, as cited in Storey, 1994):

The process that I want to call scientific is a process that involves the continual apprehension of meaning, the constant appraisal of significance, accompanied by a running act of checking to be sure I am doing what I want to do, and of judging correctness or incorrectness. This checking

and judging and accepting that together constitute understanding are done by me and can be done for me by no one else. They are as private as my toothache, and without them science is dead (pp. 9-10).

This statement plays an encouraging role for the qualitative heuristic researcher. It is bringing the awareness to those who are researching human experience to consider in-depth creative cycling to gain its unique validity (Storey, 1994, 2006).

3.3 Research Procedure

A search through the library and Internet was started to get some information on past research related to the subject matter. The researcher first obtained a letter of identification from the Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya (UM), Kuala Lumpur. Then, an application was sent to the Education Research Department to obtain permission to carry out the research. An application was also sent to the Counseling Center, which is located in Klang Valley, around the city of Kuala Lumpur, to obtain permission to use the premises and to carry out the research. Lastly, a consent letter was prepared and signed by the participants who were willing to go through a minimum of seven psychotherapy sessions with the researcher / therapist.

3.4 Sample Size and Participant Selection

For the purpose of this research, the best participants were those that were keen to know themselves, and also who would like to find the meaning in life as well as to settle some of their unfinished issues. The research was open to all races in Klang Valley in Malaysia. Klang Valley is the most populated region in Malaysia. Thereby the researcher was expected to select suitable samples for the research. The researcher

advertized the study by using leaflet and poster in several settings such as University of Malaya campus, selected counseling centers and through the recommendation of colleagues and friends. The participants were also selected through snowball sampling, in which participants were asked to recommend others whom they knew were interested to participate in the study.

The age range of the potential participants in this study was from 35 years or older. The researcher felt that this was the population that has more experiences in life in which they were expected to be able to tap and comprehend better the spiritual element within the self. Ten participants have gone through the selection interview sessions (The five interview questions are shown in Appendix M). They were accepted to participate in the psychotherapy session when they were able to at least respond to four items in the checklist in the selection scheme (as shown in Appendix M) during the selection interview. Three participants had pulled out owing to unforeseen circumstances; they could not commit themselves to accomplish the entire psychotherapy sessions. Seven participants / clients in the Klang Valley, around the city of Kuala Lumpur were selected to participate in this study. They were the first seven who volunteered to participate in this study. They have gone through at least seven psychotherapy sessions or more, depending on their needs. They were keen to seek solutions for their unresolved issues and were open to in-depth self searching to the extent of touching their hurts. Furthermore, they were able to commit themselves to complete the entire psychotherapeutic process. The seven participants were from various professional practices and had the ability to understand contemporary English. The participants of the study were similar in terms of race and cultural background. All of them are Chinese women of Malaysian origin. But they were varied in terms of age and spiritual dimension / orientation. Five participants were Christian, one was with the Yoga community and one was not committed to any spiritual orientation. The seven

participants were arranged in alphabetical order from participant A to participant G. They were assured confidentiality and anonymity.

Besides, the researcher has developed a set of instructions to convey to the participants; it consisted of several elements: (a) the nature of the research involved the participants as the co-researcher and the therapist / researcher was also a participant in the study; (b) the purpose of the study was to capture the essence and the meaning of spiritual experiences in the research; (c) commitment and confidentiality of the participants in the therapeutic process; (d) the participant's ability and willingness to articulate the experiences; and (e) the participants have to fill in individual's particulars and sign the consent letter of involvement. The content of the participant's particulars form and informed consent letter are shown in Appendix D, Appendix E and Appendix F.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through psychotherapy sessions with potential participants. The time frame for the data collection was approximately between a year to fifteen months. Data collection would involve an in-depth psychotherapeutic process. A participant's sense of spirituality is a phenomenon that can appear at any time during the psychotherapeutic process. Different participants respond spiritually from different types of expressive, transpersonal psychotherapeutic approaches. Therefore, the following expressive, transpersonal psychotherapeutic approaches were engaged in with each of the participants in order to deepen each participant's sense of spirituality: Jungian based expressive arts, Satir systemic therapy, hypnotherapy and existential therapy were applied interchangeably and individually, depending on the situations and the needs of the participants in the psychotherapeutic process (as shown in the first

portion of chapter four, the description of the psychotherapy sessions). These psychotherapeutic approaches are elaborated in the following section:

- i. The Satir Model with the map of the family of origin, the wheel of influence, the self mandala, integrating inner resources with parts party (an example of the parts party is shown in 4.1.2.4: Description of the fourth session of participant B, p. 120), and also the map of life journey incorporating the practice of narrative therapy were utilized in order to facilitate the participants to realize their resources. The process of evolving, healing and integrating is working at all the levels of the Satir Model (as shown in Figure 2.1), it is examining all the parts and discovers how the parts can support, help and love each other in order to be brought home for integration (Satir, 1988; Satir et al., 2006).
- ii. The Jungian based expressive arts therapy such as sand tray therapy, art work, journaling and meditation were used to enhance the participants' awareness and self understanding, bringing them to their inner psychic to awaken them to new possibilities, developing a conducive inner personal sphere to allow the inner psychic material to move and evolve out from within them, so that they can comprehend personal meaning in developing a higher human development into enlightenment (application of sand tray therapy is shown in Appendix V).
- iii. The transpersonal based framework of hypnotherapy which consisted of the theoretical background of psychodynamic therapy and cognitive behavioral emotive therapy was used to work on the participants' mental reconstruction with the unconscious mind. Hypnotherapy is acting as a gateway to deeper feelings and issues appropriate for psychotherapeutic intervention as well as

to developing a sense of enlightenment (techniques of EMDR and the healing white light are shown in Appendix W).

- iv. The mixed construction of Irvin D. Yalom's perspective of existential therapy and Victor E. Frankl's perspective of logotherapy were used to reinforce and develop the participants' confidence and self esteem. It is cultivating an understanding of the self and the participants began to comprehend their values and meaning in life (an example of the existential approach is shown in 4.1.6.8: Description of the eighth session of participant F, p. 187).

In the course of minimizing the disclosure of her own valuing system, the therapist was taking precautions not to impose her own belief system by the act of reflexivity when conducting the psychotherapy sessions (Moustakas, 1990). After each psychotherapy session, she would examine herself with the questions which can be found in Appendix N. She was aware of spiritual exclusivism (Pargament, 2007). By minimizing the impact of the various disclosures of her valuing system, the therapist was helping the participants to heal and grow, as supported in literature (Miller, 2010; Richards & Bergin, 2007). An external co-supervisor was selected to validate the research data and findings. The co-supervisor had over 10 years of working experience as a therapist and was interested in spirituality and therapy. The role of the external co-supervisor was to examine the research process and the data analysis processes and offer feedback on the reported findings.

The researcher was playing the role as the therapist in all the psychotherapy sessions. This was consistent with the heuristic approach as the researcher was also the participant (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2009; Hiles, 2002). Besides, Moustakas (1990) emphasized the importance of the self of the researcher in a study where he stated that, "The self of the researcher is present throughout the process, while understanding the

phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge. Heuristic processes incorporate creative self-processes and self-discoveries.” (p. 9). Apart from achieving the psychotherapy goals, the researcher believed this research study was to cast light on in-depth exploration of spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process; thus it was reminding the counselor to develop a mindful and reflective spirit in order to help enhance her “self” to facilitate the participants in the psychotherapeutic process. Besides, the researcher was exercising self reflection after every session in order to increase her self-awareness and better identify her own values, strengths, vulnerabilities, biases and blind spot; ultimately, it is to reduce coercion in the psychotherapy treatment. Apart from this, the researcher often referred to her supervisor and external co-supervisor for advice in controlling her biases and minimizing the disclosure of her own value system.

The researcher / therapist was convinced that a structure or discipline was needed to help unfold spiritual elements within the self of the participants. Therefore the therapist was utilizing and providing different psychotherapy tools, techniques and frameworks to the participants according to each participant’s need and the needs of psychotherapy. The basic theoretical framework the researcher was utilizing in the psychotherapeutic process was divided into four stages. The four stages of psychotherapy treatment plan were serving as a guideline to the therapist. The duration of treatment was participant dependent and it varied in terms of the psychotherapeutic progress for each participant to go through a stage. The stages are described in the following plan of action:

3.5.1 Stage one: Establishing the psychotherapy rapport

From the first session, the researcher was utilizing the humanistic approach such as unconditional positive regard. The atmosphere of acceptance and respect was aired. The participants were encouraged to express their personal needs, feelings and thinking independently and they were free to be who they are. The therapist unconditionally cared and accepted the participants without placing stipulations on the acceptance (Banmen, 2008a). It was an attitude of “I’ll accept you just the way you are” (Pargament, 2007, p. 57). Though it was impossible for the therapist to genuinely care and accept the participants all the time, at least the therapist was real during the psychotherapy session, which meant she was congruent and did not act as an expert, nor felt superior in any way. The researcher believed that the greater she cared, accepted and valued the participants, the greater the chances of success in therapy. The researcher / therapist was formulating the initial engagement in a way that enabled the process of immersion and incubation to generate mutual acceptance and understanding.

Meanwhile, the therapist was also interacting with empathic understanding in order to build up a thorough close relationship with the participants. The therapist firmly believed the participants have their own resources or strengths for existence. It was through the mutual trusting psychotherapeutic relationship, the participants told their stories, by externalizing, deconstructing and thickening the stories, the participants felt stronger and saw “light” in their life. It was when the therapist was making contact with the participants that the statement of the problem became clearer; thus the therapist was able to reconstruct the treatment plan in a way helpful to the participants’ well-being. Although this was the first stage of the psychotherapeutic process, the researcher has started immersing herself in the participants’ world and stayed connected with them. This is relational to Moustakas (1990) statements of “...Focusing enables one to see

something as it is and to make whatever shifts are necessary to make contact with necessary awarenesses and insights...” (p. 25). Elements of tacit knowing and intuition allowed the researcher / therapist to facilitate the participants’ implicit characters to unfold. For instance: Participant A realized her greatest resource for problem solving came from the divine (as shown in Appendix G). Participant B was allowing her inner desire for community life to unfold onto the arrangement of figurines in the sand tray (as shown in Appendix G). Participant E was able to recognize the fear of change within her (as shown in Appendix G). The participatory spirit between the therapist and the participants was inviting mutual cooperation to explore and discover the process of self-searching. The spirituality of some participants has started to emerge in this stage of the psychotherapeutic process.

3.5.2 Stage two: Implementing the psychotherapy strategy

This was the stage the researcher named “the main dish” of the psychotherapeutic process. There were basically two phases: (a) Healing and learning, and (b) Self-nurturing. In the healing and learning phase, the participants were assisted in developing an appropriate way to integrate their cognitions, emotions, body and senses in order to reframe and diminish the impact of their unfinished issues. In a number of cases with the participants, EMDR¹ (eye movement dissociation and reprocessing), forgiveness therapy and creative journaling were being used to ease the participants’ past hurtful experiences. For instance: participant E, participant F and participant G were freed from their hurtful emotions. Along the process of breaking through the wall of conflicts and fragmentations, unification and integration of the fragmented parts have

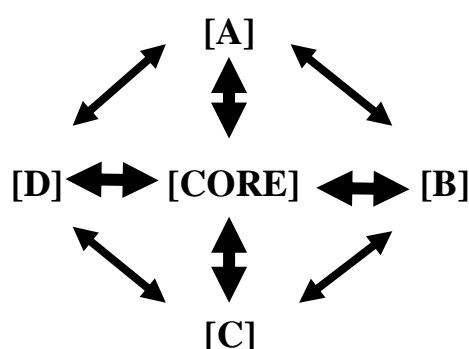
¹ EMDR was developed by Francine Shapiro in 1987. It is a therapeutic method particularly in the healing of negative emotional experiences and traumas (Shapiro, 2001, p. 222).

come together in peace. Whenever there was a need to stabilize the participants' learning and coping, the self introspection homework would be given and the self hypnosis technique was taught. Further during the psychotherapeutic process, when the participants were engaged well with the interaction of the psychotherapeutic relationships, healing and learning were enhanced. In this period the researcher / therapist was able to dwell with the participants, as Moustakas (1990) has stated beautifully in his book, "... an inner attention, a staying with, a sustained process of systematically contacting the more central meanings of an experience. Focusing enables one to see something as it is and to make whatever shifts are necessary to remove the clutter and make contact with necessary awareness and insights into one's experiences" (p. 25). By dwelling and focusing, the researcher was able to detect and achieve new understandings or new ideas to foster the psychotherapeutic relationship as well as the psychotherapeutic process.

In the phase of self-nurturing, the participants have shown how they have learned to accept every part of the self in order to achieve integration. Through the counseling tools, namely expressive arts therapy and hypnotherapy, the participants have acquired new skills and maintained their self control in the psychotherapeutic process. For instance: participant D realized the creativeness within her to humoring her life is the key to ease her depressed emotions (as shown in Appendix H). Participant E acknowledged her intuition was actually protecting her and has given her the wisdom of coping in life (as shown in Appendix H). The spiritual experiences have taken place during the transformative psychotherapeutic process. The spiritual experiences were expressed in explicit and implicit ways. Among the spiritual experiences, there were theistic and non-theistic spirituality as well as humanistic perspectives in the concept of individuation and self-actualization. The spiritual experiences were manifested in the form of energy movement and visions that carried

messages, the out of space sensation, the chirping sounds of the birds and the sense of stability at the core of the being (as shown in Appendix I).

Stage two was considered a journey from being in exile to coming home (Metzner, 1980). The therapist was facilitating the treatment plan based on the techniques and tools of the psychotherapeutic process being mentioned. Basically, the connection among the psychotherapeutic tools is shown in Figure 3.1.



Key:

[A]: The Satir Model

[B]: Existential therapy and logotherapy

[C]: Hypnotherapy

[D]: Expressive Arts Therapy

[Core]: The Self – the core of the being

↔ : The connection between the psychotherapeutic approaches with the self

Figure 3.1. The connection among the psychotherapeutic tools with the self.

The therapist normally started facilitating the self understanding process with the tools in the Satir model **[A]**. For instance: the map of the family of origin and the wheel of influence. Hypnotherapy **[C]** and expressive arts therapy **[D]** were applied as an adjunct to the healing and learning process, together with the parts integration and the map of life journey to integrate the inner psychic material to move and evolve them out from within, further on the existential therapy was incorporated **[B]** to reinforce the self **[CORE]** where the participants were able to examine their inner parts, discover and

comprehend their personal meaning and value in life. The ultimate aim for the psychotherapeutic process was to help participants touch their “self” and to establish a new way of being.

As the therapist explored closely the expression and the reaction of the participants during the psychotherapeutic process, she was also examining and discovering the essence of spirituality in their significant statements. Meanwhile, the therapist also dwelled herself into the participatory self-introspection with the questions which can be found in Appendix N. This action was attuned to Moustakas’s (2001) statement, “My primary task is to recognize whatever exists in my consciousness as a fundamental awareness to receive it, accept it, support it and dwell inside it” (p. 263). Through the participation and the investigation of the nature of spirituality, the researcher / therapist was hoping to understand and elucidate the phenomenon of transpersonal spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process. This was generated by a total process of immersion and incubation.

3.5.3 Stage three: The emergence of the transpersonal self

The objective of stage three was to promote the transpersonal self, the real inner self of the person. The process of inner transformation was expected to reach its balance at this stage. The psychological being and the spiritual being were connected and the constant flow of the inner energy was enhancing the transpersonal self to grow, to mature and to achieve self actualization. It was an intrinsic movement toward harmony and it enhanced a higher human development. The participants were being led in the psychotherapeutic process to realize that they were the author of their lives. Eventually, the participants were able to find the sense of meaning or purpose in life. One is responsible on the account of one’s existence (Yalom, 1980).

Some of the characteristics which the participants possessed during the duration of the study were as follows:

- (i) The acceptance of the strengths and weaknesses of the self and others.
- (ii) The ability to cope with pressures, challenges and uncertainties.
- (iii) The sense of ability to establish satisfying intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships.
- (iv) The openness to accept and appreciate the nature and basis of everyday life experiences.
- (v) The interest to involve in social issues and the welfare of others in the community and society.
- (vi) The courage to deal with new experiences in life.

A three dimensional framework was used as a guideline to affirm the emergence of the transpersonal self of the participants. The expression of the transpersonal self was a significant identification of the essence of humanity and divinity in a person. The convergence of the three dimensions of self would produce what Satir has acknowledged as “Peace within, peace between and peace among” (Satir, 1988, p. 368). In addition, Moustakas (1990) has illuminated that “Behavior is governed and experience is determined by the unique perceptions, feelings, intuitions, beliefs, and judgments housed in the internal frame of reference of a person. Meanings are inherent in a particular world view, an individual life, and the connections between self, other, and the world” (p. 32). The “self” of the therapist was also revealed in its own way. This was the moment the therapist closely resonated with the participant’s transpersonal “self”. There were glimpses of mutual understanding when the “self” of the participants was being connected with the “self” of the therapist. For instance: the therapist’s sense of gravity within was able to resonate with participant D’s sense of stability at the core of her being (as shown in Appendix I). This moment of psychotherapeutic process was

regarded as the phase of illumination. The movement and the connection of the three dimensions are shown in Figure 3.2.

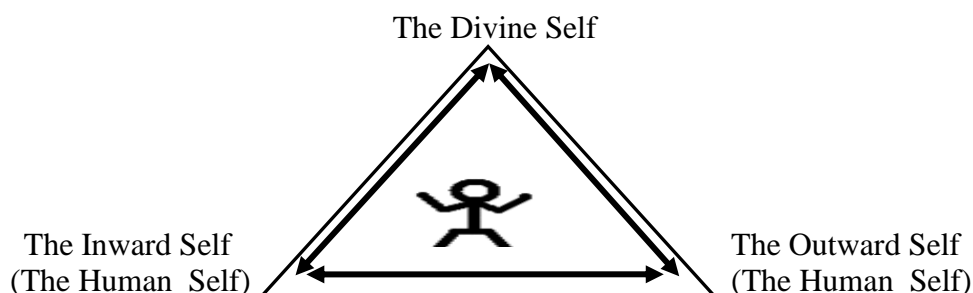


Figure 3.2. The three dimensions of the self.

(i). The Divine Self: This refers to the connection between the individual with the divine / God. The presence of spirituality in oneself was manifested through spiritual related activities such as prayer and meditation. Each participant in this study has experienced the spiritual self differently in the psychotherapeutic process. Some were inspired by the presence of spirituality (for instance: the case of participant A and participant G are shown in Appendix J), some were healed by the power of the divine (for instance: the case of participant C and participant E are shown in Appendix J), some were strengthened spiritually and they realized that they ought to continue praying and meditating for further self-betterment (for instance: the case of participant D and participant F are shown in Appendix J). The therapist was deeply convinced that the peaceful sensation within her was the source of spirituality and inspiration to regulate her spiritual life to experience times of being with the universe.

(ii) The Outward Self: This refers to the connection between the individual with other people, and also the individual with the environment. The presence of spirituality in oneself was manifested through the love the individual shows to others such as community service, and volunteering in social and public service. In the case of the participants in this research study, each participant has realized her value in life and

was heading towards her direction in life. Participant A was enthusiastic to do charitable work (as shown in Appendix K). Participant B aimed to bring peace to the world (as shown in Appendix K). Participant C was intending to visit the needy in the hospital (as shown in Appendix K). Participant D was inspired to utilize her talent (as shown in Appendix K). Participant E realized she was on her way to save souls (as shown in Appendix K). Participant F recognized her responsibility to be a good mother to her daughter (as shown in Appendix K), whereas participant G would like to share the yoga philosophy with others (as shown in Appendix K). As for the therapist, she has found her enthusiasm in social welfare work despite the hardship she was facing when dealing with difficult personalities. She believed she was a catalyst in her own way in bringing changes in certain social settings.

(iii). The Inward Self: This represents the connection between individuals with their inner self (soul / the essence of being). The presence of spirituality in oneself was manifested through the transformation of the self. The new self owns the energy, the peace, the confidence and the inner resources to deal with new experiences (as shown in section 4.3.5 the self depiction of the participants, pp. 246-255). The participants were gaining the insights to advancing into the realm of spiritual values during the psychotherapeutic process. They have begun to get in touch with their inner being. They have started the journey of self integration that led them to the state of wholeness where their human self and their spiritual self would integrate and balance into congruency. They have indeed started the early journey of individuation (Jung, 1959). The therapist felt confident to own herself, even with flaws and weaknesses in her everyday life. She was mindful toward her own self whenever she was being challenged and being put into an insecure situation (Gerber, 2009; Goleman, 2001).

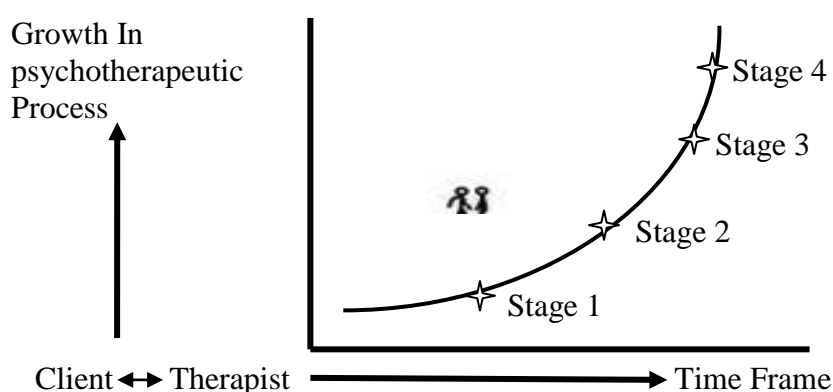
3.5.4 Stage four: Termination and Assessment

Termination formed the last stage of the psychotherapeutic process. In terminating the psychotherapeutic process, the therapist was helping the participants to consolidate the gains they have made through the psychotherapeutic process. This was including the process of reinforcing the new skills, behaviors and the ways of thinking that the participants have learned. Apart from this, the therapist also addressed and affirmed the participants' abilities in managing issues in the future. The technique of ego strengthening within hypnotherapy was being used to build up the confidence and to reduce participants' dependencies on the therapist (as shown in Appendix L for the case of participant A and participant E).

In helping the participants to consolidate what they have gained in the psychotherapeutic process, the therapist has asked the participants to articulate what has changed for them and what they believed have contributed to the change. In drawing assessment from the participants regarding the psychotherapeutic process, the therapist has asked the participants to create an expressive artwork or creative journaling (as shown in 4.3.5 the self depiction of the participants, pp. 246-255). The self depiction of the participants revealed the ultimate meaning of life they have gained / found from the psychotherapeutic process. This was to strengthen them in a positive way to provide greater confidence in their ability to be who they really are. The expressive art work has served as a support to the participants' future spiritual lives. This step was related to the stage from illumination to explication as Moustakas (1990) revealed, "Illumination opens the door of a new awareness, it is an altogether new discovery of something that has been present for some time yet beyond immediate awareness. In explication, a comprehensive depiction of the core or dominant themes are developed" (pp. 30-31).

As the purpose of this research was to explore spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process, the researcher would like to see how the spiritual values have been brought to the foreground of the psychotherapeutic process to facilitate the participants' healing and growth; thereby, at the last stage of the psychotherapy sessions, the researcher / therapist prepared a spiritual experiences questionnaire (as shown in Appendix O) and asked the participants to verify whether the themes described their spiritual experiences. Any theme receiving less than two affirmative responses was not included in the data analysis. The verification of the spiritual experiences in the counseling process as in the questionnaire is shown in Appendix P.

The psychotherapeutic processes from the first session until the last session encompassing all the four stages are illustrated in Figure 3.3.



Key:

Stage One: Externalizing the problem / data.

Stage Two: Engaging and deconstructing the problem / data, gain self understanding
and self nurturing, transformation occurred, spiritual wisdom enhanced.

Stage Three: The emergence of the transpersonal self.

Stage Four: The convergence of the spiritual experiences.

Figure 3.3. The four stages of the spiritual psychotherapeutic progress.

Each session lasted between fifty to ninety minutes. The therapist was journeying with the participants throughout the entire sessions of the psychotherapeutic process. In every session, the therapist audio-taped the session and took pictures of each participant's artwork to ensure all spiritual information were complete and available as data for the research findings. Meanwhile, the tools and artworks used to assist participants were kept for data analysis. After every session, data collection was carried out and later data analysis was engaged according to the following sequence:

(a). Each psychotherapy session was verbatim transcribed by the therapist.

During the transcription of the sessions, the researcher was memoing and concentrating on maintaining the participants' internal frame of reference in order to formulate the meanings of the early codes; the statements were developed into the detailed categories of individual's spiritual experiences.

(b). The reflections on the psychotherapeutic processes and the psychotherapy relationships (as shown in Appendix N), as well as the self introspection of the therapist were compiled into a spiritual journal of the therapist in order to identify the process and the ways in which her spirituality appeared in the psychotherapeutic process (The self reflections of the therapist are shown in chapter four, section 4.2: A Summary of the Therapist's Heuristic Reflection on the Psychotherapeutic Process). The therapist has indulged herself as Moustakas (1990) described "... In heuristic research the investigator must have had a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated. There must have been actual autobiographical connections" (p. 14). It was a means to organize the huge amount of data into meaning units. Meanwhile, in the process of self reflection and data organization, the therapist was examining her own spiritual beliefs and values as a means to reduce value conflict and to control biases in the psychotherapeutic relationship (Ahmad & Mustaffa, 2011; Kelly, 2005; Lo, 2011; Richards & Bergin, 2007; Sue, 1998).

(c). The researcher was engaged with the concept of data triangulation as a means of supplementing the psychotherapy session data; she collected the participants' personal documents, journals and artwork that offered additional meaning and depth of the spiritual experiences. This was to ensure a right strategy to improve the validity and the reliability of the research findings (Golafshani, 2003; Guion, 2002; Thurmond, 2001).

(d). In the process of data analysis, the researcher would immerse retrospectively into the raw material and the psychotherapy transcript. She was allowing the expansion of understanding on the spiritual experiences at a more subtle level. The process of incubation enabled the early codes to surface. Subsequently, as the researcher was connected fully to the flow of the entire journey of the psychotherapeutic process of each participant, there was a new discovery to illuminate the emerging characteristics of the spiritual experiences. Further on, when the researcher was indwelling within the context of the spiritual experiences, the researcher was able to explicate and to organize the emerging characteristics into the consolidated categories of spiritual experiences. The process of data analysis was done in order from one level to another level. The stages of transformation and data integration from the early codes to the emerging characteristic which later consolidated into categories of the spiritual experiences were validated by the supervisor and the external co-supervisor (Moustakas, 1990).

(e). This research was using heuristic inquiry which involved the exploration of the spiritual experiences of the participants (the co-researcher), it was also focusing on the spiritual experiences and transformation of the researcher. Thereby, the researcher has structured the framework of the findings and discussion that involved the participants' spiritual experiences, the therapist's spiritual experiences and their shared spiritual experiences as shown in Figure 3.4. This is to echo the Moustakas (1990) description of heuristic inquiry: "... a process of internal search through which one

discovers the nature of meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self knowledge” (p. 9).

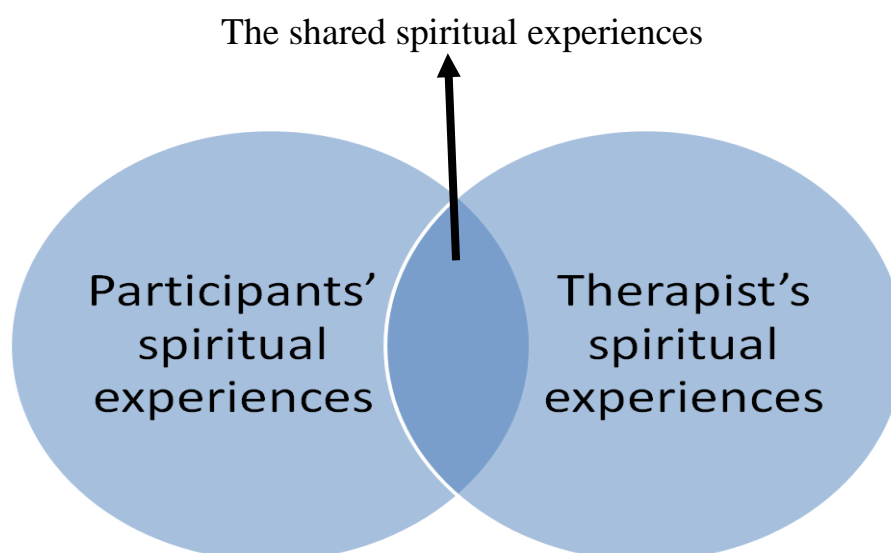


Figure 3.4. The framework of the findings and discussion.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

After collecting data from the psychotherapy sessions, the researcher started analyzing the data from the heuristic inquiry perspective. The researcher reviewed and immersed into the verbatim transcripts several times; with the process of incubation, the researcher was memoing and formulating the early codes of each participant. The researcher was also reading, indwelling and analyzing the individual participant's significant depiction that related to the subject matter in the participant's personal documents, journals, and artwork in order to get a sense of the whole spiritual environment within the psychotherapeutic process. Besides, the researcher also examined her feelings and

memories through her journal to allow new insights to emerge (an example of the process of examining is shown in Appendix R), so that the researcher could give voice to her personal experience of doing the research and the internal processes that formulated the meanings and interpretations of the spiritual experiences (Moustakas, 1990). Apart from this, the researcher's bias was examined through self-reflection and journaling.

After reviewing and dwelling with the participants' significant depiction from their personal documents, the spiritual experiences questionnaire, the researcher's verbatim transcript, the details of each participant's personal reflection, there were new fragments of understanding upon the spiritual experiences. When the researcher was receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition when she was connected fully to the flow of the entire journey of the psychotherapeutic process of each participant, units of meaning were being identified and categorized into emerging characteristics (an example of the process is shown in Appendix S) and later the categories of spiritual experiences in an order according to the psychological perspective and theoretical frameworks. During the process of transformation and data integration, the researcher would explicate and ensure the construction of the integrated data was illuminating the essence of the data (Moustakas, 1990). This step was done by examining each individual's transcript which has extracted phrases or sentences into the early codes. Meanwhile, the co-supervisor would examine the integrated data by reading the individual early codes and tracked down how well they represent the transcript. Following on from the data integration, elements of the data were grouped into clusters of consolidated categories such as self integration, the meaning and value in life. A summary of the framework of data analysis for the findings and discussion is shown in Appendix T. An example of the process of transformation and data integration is shown in Table 3.1(a) to Table 3.5(c):

Table 3.1 (a)

The Process of Transformation and Data Integration – Participant E

Psychotherapy Transcript	Early Codes
Psychotherapy session 4	
C: Would you like to share more about yourself in the tray?	
PE: I am growing a bit older and wiser compare to the last round. I am moving forward from a hillside down to a flat land. I am quite happy, actually I am no longer sitting under the tree which I did some years ago. I am moving downwards, I am moving forward. I am happy. A bit of resistance, a bit worry whether it will be successful. I don't think that will stop me and I want to move forward. There are friends who are supporting me.	She feels consoled as she has progressed and moving forward with life.
C: If you want to move the figurine of yourself, where would you like to move?	
PE: Moving forward to the dream (participant E moved the figurine toward the house). It is still be myself, where my heart is. The house is the place where my soul can rest.	To be my own self. Peace with herself.
C: What is the bird on the top of the roof?	
PE: The bird can see things from far because of its nature. When something stands in a higher place, it can see things from far, can see things that we could not see. As a kind of proactive, for me is a kind of wisdom. Bird can be signifies as someone that can be trusted, someone whom we can rely. As I am processing, the divine came into my mind. I always feel peaceful when birds are around chirping, this is a kind of calmness, comfortable and happy.	The bird as the divine. She reveals the divine as whom she can rely on, who can gives her a kind of calmness, comfort and happiness.
Psychotherapy session 7	
PE: When I walk on my time line, I see myself becoming bigger. When I am at the peak, my left hand is shaking. When I press on the anchor point, I actively imagine I am in the state of making money through my networking and friends.	Networking with friends.
C: How do you feel now?	
PE: Feeling good, with every step I take, I am becoming bigger. I am smiling and happy.	
C: Is that anything you feel increasing?	
PE: I know well my resources; I ought to be brave enough to use them.	Connecting with inner resources.
C: That's what you think?	
PE: Don't keep it, do it!	

Table 3.1 (b)

The Process of Transformation and Data Integration – Participant G

Psychotherapy Transcript	Early Codes
Psychotherapy session 3	
C: What about now?	
PG: Very peace and calm. I saw a blossoming lotus on a lake.	Vision of a blossoming lotus.
C: How do you interpret that lotus?	
PG: It is beautiful. When things are being let go, everything is still fine and well.	Feeling free.
Psychotherapy session 4	
C: How are you going to deal with the feeling of jealousy?	
PG: Learning to let go. I do not wish myself to be like that!	Learn to free herself
C: What do you see from your life size portrait?	
PG: Probably it connects with my heart chakra. I need to free myself from the old self	Connecting with the chakra energy Getting in touch within Freeing herself from the old self
C: What is the reason you put a flower on your head chakra?	Connecting with the chakra
PG: I feel human has unlimited resources. Perhaps I need to discover the resources, develop them and spread	Discover resources (yoga) and develop them.
Psychotherapy session 2	
C: How is now?	
PG: No more floating. I am sitting on the chair firmly. No more heaviness in my hand. My mother's image has disappeared. I feel there is an energy of warmth and love beside me, on the left side of me.	Feeling free Feeling the energy of warmth and love

Table 3.2 (a)

The Process of Data Integration – Participant E

Early Codes	Emerging Characteristics
1. She feels console as she has progressed and moving forward with life.	Making changes.
2. To be my own self. Peace with herself.	To be my own self.
3. She reveals the divine as whom she can rely on, who can gives her a kind of calmness, comfort and happiness.	Feeling peace within. Recognizing the divine. The bird as the divine who granted calmness, comfort and happiness.
4. The bird as the divine.	Networking with people
5. Networking with friends.	Connecting with inner self
6. Connecting with inner resources.	

Table 3.2 (b)

The Process of Data Integration – Participant G

Early Codes	Emerging Characteristics
1. Vision of a blossoming lotus	Vision of a blossoming lotus
2. Feeling free	
3. Learn to free herself	Freeing herself from the old self
4. Freeing herself from the old self	
5. Connecting with the chakra energy	Connection of the chakra energy
6. Connecting with the chakra	Being mindful through the chakra energy
7. Getting in touch within	
8. Feeling the energy of warmth and love	Experiencing the energy of warmth and love
9. Discover resources (yoga) and develop it.	Sharing yoga philosophy

Table 3.3 (a)

The Process of Consolidating the Categories – Participant E

Categories	Emerging Characteristics
1. The process of self integration	Making changes. To be my own self. Recognizing the divine. Connecting with inner self
2. The expression of spiritual experiences	Feeling peace within. The bird as the divine who granted calmness, comfort and happiness.
3. The meaning of life and self value	Networking with people

Table 3.3 (b)

The Process of Consolidating the Categories – Participant G

Categories	Emerging Characteristics
1. The process of self integration	Freeing herself from the old self Connection of the chakra energy Being mindful through the chakra energy
2. The expression of spiritual experiences	Vision of a blossoming lotus
3. The meaning of life and self value	Sharing yoga philosophy

Table 3.4 (a)

The Process of Consolidating the Sub-Categories - Participant E

Self Integration	The Expression of Spiritual Experiences
1.Personal Growth	1.Explicit
To be my own self. Recognizing the divine. Connecting with the inner self	The bird as the divine who granted calmness, comfort and happiness.
2.Self Transformation	2.Implicit
Making changes.	Feeling peace within.

Table 3.4 (b)

The Process of Consolidating the Sub-Categories – Participant G

Self Integration	The Expression of Spiritual Experiences
1.Personal Growth	1.Explicit
Being mindful through the chakra energy	Vision of a blossoming lotus Connection of the chakra energy
2.Self Transformation	2.Implicit
Freeing herself from the old self	Experiencing the energy of warmth and love

Table 3.5

The Process of Consolidating the Categories of Spiritual Experiences

Table 3.5 (a)

Category 1: The Process of Self Integration

Sub-Categories	Participant E	Participant G
1. Personal Growth	To be my own self Recognizing the divine Connecting with the inner self	Being mindful through the chakra energy
2. Self Transformation	Making changes.	Freeing herself from the old self

Table 3.5 (b)

Category 2: The Expression of the Spiritual Experiences

Sub-Categories	Participant E	Participant G
1. Explicit	The bird as the divine who granted calmness, comfort and happiness	Connection of the chakra energy
2. Implicit	Feeling peace within.	Experiencing the energy of warmth and love

Table 3.5 (c)

Category 3: The Meaning of Life and Self Value

Participant E	Participant G
Networking with people	Sharing yoga philosophy

Remarks: The consolidated categories of spiritual experiences from participant A to participant G are shown in Appendix Q. Category 4 was uncovered because it was

being discussed in chapter 4, section 4.3.5: The self depiction of the participants. There were also two examples of the participant's transcript in Appendix V and Appendix W.

Clusters of the emerging characteristics were validated by returning to the original transcripts and examining whether some elements of the data were neglected in the clusters of the emerging characteristics. This was also to examine whether the clusters of the emerging characteristics suggest anything that was not contained in the original transcripts. Along the process of data analysis, the supervisor and the external co-supervisor would verify the emerging characteristics identified. Specifically, the external co-supervisor would offer her feedback, asked thought provoking questions that helped the researcher to process her thoughts and reactions as data analysis progressed. The co-supervisor also shared her expertise on how to consolidate the categories of the spiritual experiences. During the data analysis process, participant B, participant D and participant E managed to verify the identified individual emerging characteristics. The other participants were unavailable during the period when the process took place. Finally, the researcher prepared a table to show the consolidated categories of spiritual experiences of the participants (as shown in Appendix Q) after the researcher, the supervisor and the external co-supervisor had agreed on the identified categories of spiritual experiences. This was a way to help ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the research study.

When the whole units of meaning were being completely explicated, the process eventually came to the construction of composite depiction of all the participants and the therapist / researcher. This is considered as the phrase of explication and creative synthesis in heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990). The composite depiction was a consolidated description of the self depiction of all the participants and the therapist (as shown in section 4.3.5: The self depiction of the participants and 4.4.4: The self depiction of the therapist). The composite depiction was developed into a creative

expression in a form of a poem and a painting. This was done through a brainstorming session with each participant. They have decided on the figures on the painting: (1) An angel carrying colored balloons, (b) A dove flying freely, (c) a lady with a lighted candle, sitting on a ship, (d) A sailing ship with colored flat, (e) Lotus floating on the sea and (f) The sea is the background of the painting. The painting was representing the group description, reflecting the experiences of individual participants throughout the journey of the psychotherapeutic process (as shown in Figure 4.26). Following on, the researcher validated the findings by checking the original data (an example of the process is shown in Appendix S); she also asked the participants to read the composite depiction in the form of a poem and elaborate on whether the depiction accurately expressed their spiritual journey in the psychotherapeutic process.

In the final stage, the supervisor and external co-supervisor would examine the research process and data generated from the psychotherapeutic processes. They would offer feedback on whether the findings obtained in the psychotherapeutic processes and data analysis steps support the reported findings of the study. The movement and the connection of the supervisors' processes of validation of the findings are shown in Appendix U. The analytic frameworks of the entire therapeutic sessions are shown in Table 3.6. The process of validation supports the findings of this research study.

Table 3.6

The Analytic Framework of the Entire Psychotherapeutic Process

Data Source	Data Analysis			
An Example	Early Codes	Emerging Characteristics	Categories	Composite Depiction
1. Therapist's personal journal	160	20	<div> 1. Personal growth. 2. Self transformation. 3. Explicit spiritual experiences. 4. Implicit spiritual experiences. 5. The meaning of life and self value. </div>	1. Poem
2. Participants' self reflections Participant A to participant G	55	13		
3. Verbatim Transcript Total of therapy sessions PA (8 sessions), PB(7 sessions), PC (7 sessions), PD(7 sessions), PE (7 sessions), PF(11 sessions), PG (8 sessions).	321	89		2. Drawing
	e.g. Connecting with the inner self, Touched by the Divine.			
4. The spiritual experiences questionnaire (as shown in Appendix P)	117	10		

Note: PA stands for Participant A.
PB stands for Participant B.
PC stands for Participant C.
PD stands for Participant D.
PE stands for Participant E.
PF stands for Participant F.
PG stands for Participant G.

3.7 Conclusion

This research study investigated the depth of spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. Since the nature of the study involved in-depth spirituality, the qualitative heuristic methodology was deemed appropriate. Moreover, the four psychotherapeutic tools and techniques used in the research, namely the Satir Model, expressive arts therapy, hypnotherapy and existential therapy were effective in leading the participants in exploring their inner self. It was the reciprocal integration effect and the co-operative spirit of the participants that have enhanced the entire process of meeting the research study objectives.

Through the process of psychotherapy, the researcher has learned how spirituality connects to the theoretical framework of humanistic psychology. The human self can be developed to a higher level when it was connecting and integrating with the divine self. Therein, it can be proved that the totality of the self is made up of the human self and the divine self.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with the description of the psychotherapy sessions of the seven participants who have gone through the entire journey of psychotherapy sessions with the researcher / therapist. The following section will describe and discuss the findings of the psychotherapy sessions with the seven participants. The description is done in relation to the heuristic inquiry approach.

4.1.1 Participant A

Participant A was 38 year-old Chinese single lady who worked as a travel agent in a travel agency. She came for psychotherapy because she had begun experiencing panic attacks. The symptoms of her panic attack included shortness of breath with “something” sensations, accompanied by trembling, fear and numbness in her body. The first panic attack occurred unexpectedly at work. The recurrent panic attack took place as a result of a stressful and provoking situation in her workplace. She has been to a doctor who diagnosed her as suffering from panic attacks. The doctor has taught her breathing exercises to practice whenever she notices a panic attack starting.

When participant A talked about her panic attacks, she mentioned a dream that had occurred during that period. In the dream, she saw a huge snake coming out from nowhere; the snake would rest his huge head on her shoulder and then disappear.

Participant A also complained about her bad memory. She could not remember the

details of things she has done even a week ago. She told the therapist that she was very active during her teenage years. She could remember an accident that occurred that resulted in her losing half of her left index finger. Since that incident, she has learned to trust God more in handling difficult moments in her life.

Initially, the purpose of participant A seeking psychotherapy was to find out the reasons for her panic attacks. Eventually, she expanded on her psychotherapy purpose to learn more about her “self”.

After taking the case history, the therapist gave participant A homework to help her reflect on herself. The therapist asked participant A to write down everything that happens before, during and after an attack. If the panic attack does not occur, she will also need to write down everything that happens during the day. After she has described everything, she will need to reflect on her mood, psychological response and her thoughts. This exercise was aimed at helping Participant A regain an element of control over the panic attack symptoms.

4.1.1.1 Description of the First Session

Participant A’s initial goal of psychotherapy was to find out the cause of her panic attacks. She was consistently doing the exercise of self-reflection after the first psychotherapy session. Since then, there has been no recurrence of panic attacks. Participant A has been coping well with herself.

The technique of the wheel of influence was utilized in the first session. The aim of using this technique was to encourage participant A to be aware of resources available to her in dealing with her life challenges. One of those was her stressful workplace environment.

Participant A revealed that her family influenced her the most. She was brought up in a Catholic family; since a very young age, her mother always taught her to be forgiving and accepting, especially toward her father. Participant A was very active in both the youth group and The Legion of Mary. Her faith in God has increased during her teenage years. She was one of the leaders in the community. In Participant A's own words, "Faith in God enhances my self-confidence. All that I wanted, He just grants it to me!" However, her situation changed after she left the church when she graduated from high school. She mentioned about the fear of losing friendship and the fear of losing divine providence. She could not recall what had happened, but at the present moment she chose to stay at the grass root level rather than up on the leading board in the church. As Participant A states, "God is still with me. He has now given me a new journey. Not the same as before, I am now more to listen not to talk as a leader."

Later in the session, participant A revealed her unpleasant situation in her workplace. She was the one who designed the promotion of a product, but her colleagues felt that it was difficult to carry out her promotion design. This led Participant A to feel upset and consider transferring to another department. Nevertheless, she would also want to deal with the problem.

(*Note:* C: Therapist, PA: Participant A).

C: Which do you think will be the greatest resource that can help you?

PA: A forgiving heart.

C: It cools you down. Have a look, if you want to solve problem, is there any resources that you can use?

PA: My back up. God!

C: What have you discovered now?

PA: This problem can be solved. By using my God, the higher power, the backing support.

Participant A began to realize she has still the backing support (the higher power) whom she has experienced strongly before. Participant A was still doing her self-processing at this point of time. The session has opened a door for her to enhance her spirituality in the future. She was still searching for her direction in life.

4.1.1.2 Description of the Second Session

In the second session, the narrative therapy with the tree of life was used as a means to explore the participant's "self" further, so that it may bring her some realization and self-understanding. She has discovered more resources that can be applied in her life.

When participant A narrated her tree of life, she admitted that she is a faithful and helpful person, not only faithful toward her charity work but also the company she works with. She has found the most impacted model in her life: Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa has inspired and given her courage to persevere in learning, to make a difference and the fortitude to achieve her dream. She has been to Calcutta twice and she found her endurance toward the nasty environment has increased.

PA: I want to give service to a community, or becoming a charitable social worker in a community. But I am not able to leave my friends, my family, my work, I do not have the courage yet to leave my community and join a new community. Totally serving, totally giving.

C: You were saying this is your dream, but you have some consideration, how are you going to bring both closer?

PA: Probably I will wait until my mother pass away. My mother is the only reason that binds me. I can't let go.

Participant A was having the intention to draw up a short-term plan to see whether this would help her to determine her direction in life.

PA: I have not been there, but I always longed for that. In mountainous area, everything will be simple, unlike the modern and complex lifestyle in town. I can go back to the pre-historic life in which I can experience genuineness, goodness and holiness.

Participant A has expressed her spiritual self that longed for genuineness, goodness and holiness. She has been searching for the qualities that would fulfill her “soul”. She could not find it in her life around here, not even in church. Nevertheless, she emphasized loving others in her everyday living. She revealed that she has experienced the loving kindness of the divine. She would like to share with more people about the love of God; one of these ways is through charitable work.

PA: I want to impart what I have experienced to move people, so that they too experienced it. That is why I say I want to do charitable work. I hope more people can experience that kind of love.

Participant A has been charitably acting out in her daily life. She was still searching for the zeal she had before the age of eighteen. She was aware of the trials and temptations that had happened when she left the church previously. She is still facing challenges and obstacles in life to fulfill her wish to work toward her goals. She did not have a hundred percent confidence in taking charge of the challenges and obstacles, but she said that she would do her best.

PA: No one hundred percent certainty, but I will try.

The tree of life has indeed brought participant A to explore deeply the different aspects of her life through the various parts of the tree. More qualities and resources of participant A were shown; she has been aware of her resources and she was using them

in her daily routine. However, she was honest to admit that she was still on her journey to deal with the trials and temptations that came along the way.

4.1.1.3 Description of the Third Session

In the third session, participant A was asked to draw a life size portrait (as shown in Figure 4.1). Life size portrait is being used as a tool to facilitate and to empower participant A in her journey of finding her own answer to achieve her personal goal in life.

Participant A revealed that her soft-heartedness was the cause of her indecisiveness. She felt that she has been placating in her work whenever her colleagues expressed their opinions.

PA: Most of the time I am quite lenient, but when I am dissatisfied, I will get angry, the red color is like a fire ball, this is the time I am firm with my decision, nobody can change me.

C: What do you see?

PA: It is possible to overcome my indecisiveness.

Participant A then talked about the stressful situation in her workplace. She was not really in tune with her colleagues from the planning and advertising department. She has her own values regarding certain things, and she especially does not like to gossip and mix with those gossipers. She was keeping herself busy in order to stay away from the situation.

PA: This is not a long-term solution. That was why I intend to leave and apply for a transfer to another department.

When participant A looked at the green color in her life size portrait, she felt she could not expand the green color which signifies the charitable work, because of her tight work schedule.

PA: I longed for a new development in the new department. I am able to cope with time, I will be able to gain more time for the things I want to do.

Whenever participant A was talking about the new department, her eyes were shining as she was able to connect the new department with her charitable social work; by organizing a social networking team, they can travel together for the same purpose.

As the session progressed to another stage, participant A was keen to make changes in her life size portrait. She intends to reduce the lenient part (orange), expand the green part (charitable social work), delete the pink part (obstruction) and she would like to fill it with the rainbows. She was looking forward to sacrifice her free time, in order to gain more rainbows.

C: As you look at your life size portrait, what will be its theme?

PA: A colorful life.

C: How do you explain the theme?

PA: Colors describe the different stages of life. There are ups and downs in life. There are many things in life. Each color represents a process. I feel that our life experiences are like a portrait. A color can represent different experience, different stage. The outward look is not so important, the important part is the experiences which are enriching.

C: In this portrait, which color represents you?

PA: I am now orange in color. I will be the rainbow in future. There is always a protection from above, that is why I am using blue, it is like the sky. The sky is big and huge, I am using blue to signify its security and protection upon me.

It was obvious that participant A has gained her confidence for her future. Self-awareness, self understanding and insights are achieved throughout the process of visualizing her desire on the life size portrait. It would be a new movement in her life when she gains approval to transfer to the new department.



Figure 4.1. Participant A's life size portrait.

4.1.1.4 Description of the Fourth Session

In session four, participant A shared about the figurines she focused on her daily prayers with God. She revealed that this is a way to vent her unpleasant emotions. There was one time when she heard about the death of a friend, she would cry when she was praying. She felt that she had lost something that could not be retrieved.

PA: I treasured human relationship, either it is friends or family members. But some friends are close to me only for a period of time. It is like a journey. It is like travelling by train. The train will move from point A to point B. People may ascend and descend between the points. From young till now, people around me come and go, what is over will never come back.

C: Can you accept the process of life?

PA: I see it as a journey. Like the train. Everybody has his destination, everybody has his life to carry on. It is impossible that people will abandon their own and be with you. When we are together, we must try to treasure it.

C: Everybody has his own destination, what about you?

PA: I have already seen some directions that I need to take. I am now in the new department, a new environment, everything is new, I am opening a new page in my life.

Participant A has expressed her wish that she will not allow herself to be involved in chaotic situations. She will remind herself to stand firm in her workplace. She noticed that she has changed cognitively. She looked upon it as divine intervention because she had similar experiences before the age of eighteen. She claimed that when her relationship with the higher power is better, naturally she will change for the better. When the therapist backtracked and asked her about the metaphor of the train, participant A revealed that she was on her way home to the divine.

PA: Not many who are going home, only a few are heading towards the destination, most will descend from the train.

C: Where do you stand in this journey?

PA: I think I am still a traveler.

C: Heading towards that direction, what have you decided?

PA: I must reach the destination. Probably I need some time. On some stages I will walk, some stages I will travel by train, some stages I need to travel by bus. But the main point is that I have found the direction, when I can reach home, I do not know.

Participant A expressed that there were distractions that bind her but she did not know exactly what those distractions were. She told the therapist that she has been praying to the higher power to reveal them to her.

The therapist then used hypnotherapy to guide participant A to scan through her physical body by using the healing white light script. After waking up from the trance state, participant A revealed that there was a dark spot staring at her. This was not the first time she had such experience, she had the same experience whenever she was in a trance, either during yoga lessons or when she was praying.

PA: When I closed my eyes, I feel the darkness, there is a dark spot staring at me, I felt scared before but now I am not so scared. I do not know what it is, but when it appears, it is chilly cold. But when the white light came, the chilly cold gradually subsided. When the light comes, it is warmth and relaxing.

C: What is the chilly cold to you?

PA: I do not know. It is a dark spot. Before that I described it as the devil, an evil spirit, is the one contradicted to experiencing God.

C: What make you dare to face it now?

PA: Probably I am older now, stronger, experiencing more, I am able to deal and face it.

Participant A revealed her courage to deal with any unexpected situation is greater now. She was able to stand the dirty environment in one of Mother Teresa's centers in Calcutta. The more she could stand the unpleasant environment, the more she could feel the divine calling. The healing white light therapy indeed gave her the message that the white light was powerful enough to overturn the dark spot. She also learned a way to do contemplation and meditation.

4.1.1.5 Description of the Fifth Session

In session five, the dark spot was being externalized by using a collage, a tool of expressive arts therapy. Participant A perceived the dark spot as being an undercurrent, when she was closer to God, she could feel the disturbance. It was an obstacle when she was not strong enough to persevere.

PA: Should be the moment the spiritual life is lacking. It is like I arrange the picture in the collage. When a group of people are concentrating, the dark spot is less able to influence them. But when the person is not concentrating, the dark spot is able to disturb him (as shown in Figure 4.2).

C: When will be the time when the dark spot is not able to disturb?

PA: When the person is very close to the crucifix, the moment when he is in front. There will be a protecting power over the person, as a result he will not be influenced by the dark spot.

C: What is actually the dark spot?

PA: An obstacle.

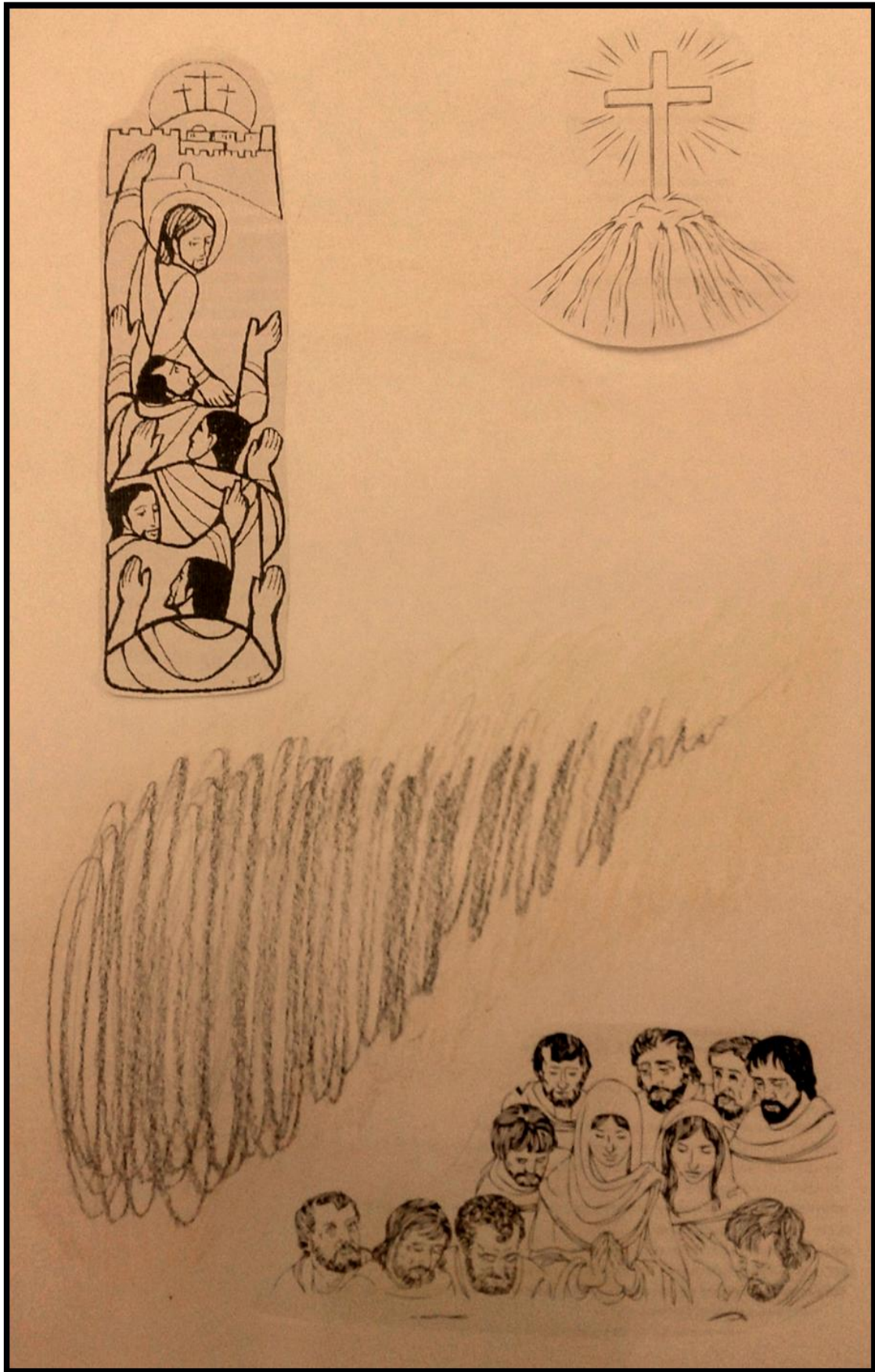


Figure 4.2. Participant A's initial description of the dark spot.

Participant A acknowledged that she was someone lagging behind; she hoped that she was someone concentrating in prayer. But actually, in real life, she was someone lagging behind, she was aware that she needs to work hard in order to get to the front.

As participant A acknowledged that she was someone lagging behind, the counselor decided to apply hypnotherapy by using the healing garden script to help her resolve the obstacle that was causing her to lag behind. During trance, when the counselor suggested to her to use the gardening tools to eliminate the weed, she was unable to follow the suggestion.

PA: My leg pain, cannot walk, something is tying my leg, my knee also pain.

When the participant felt better, she was woken up as usual. When the therapist asked her what had been pulling her in her life, she was unable to answer. The therapist decided to bring the participant into a trance for the second time. Although she was able to follow the suggestions, at some point, the participant was swaying away on other things, but nothing was pulling her. Upon her awakening, the therapist asked her about the obstacle. She described it as something within her, like an illness, it was there but did not really affect her daily routine. Later in the session, she connoted the dark spot as her shadow.

PA: If it is the shadow, I move, it will move. If I do not move, it will not move.

C: How?

PA: When I am looking for it, it appears. When I am in trance or relax, I will see it, if I am not in trance, it does not appear.

Toward the end of the session, the therapist explained to participant A about the shadow in Jungian terms. She said she can accept the Jungian concept of the shadow.

4.1.1.6 Description of the Sixth Session

Participant A was asked to describe herself by using a figurine and sticker. She chose a tortoise to represent herself because she felt that she was a slow learner. Her life was more comfortable to date; she defined it as a comfort zone where everything was fine and without competition. She felt she now had a secured home, which she recognized as the church. Her life was described as being similar to a pizza that consists of different ingredients (as shown in Figure 4.3). But the most important element along her life journey was love. She also revealed that she had contact with a few social workers in several parts of the world. She was looking forward to those places such as Rome and Szechuan, China to share her love with them. She has given a theme for her expressive arts work: “Building a World of Love”.

PA: A place that will fulfill my desire. A place that is filled with peace, love, people there are helpful, no competition, no fight.

C: You stay in Kuala Lumpur, have you found any place that can fulfill your desire?

PA: Yes, but not in long term. It is some short-term projects such as charity activities to raise fund.

As participant A talked about her involvement in charity activities, the therapist asked her to write down all her qualities, her resources which consist of the willingness to sacrifice her time, leadership, planning ability, spirit of love and her faith foundation. These qualities and resources were used to empower the participant's ego state during hypnotherapy.

During trance, the participant again encountered another distraction; she heard a motorcycle passing by that disturbed her concentration. However, she felt energized after the therapy.

Although participant A was clear about her desire to achieve her goal in life, the therapist would want to consider the distraction during trance. What might that be about?



Figure 4.3. Participant A's description of her life journey: Building a world of love.

4.1.1.7 Description of the Seventh Session

Participant A has performed suspicious behaviors when she was in trance during the fourth, fifth and sixth session. The therapist suspected those symptoms and behaviors to have had a connection with the dark spot. Therefore in session seven, the initial intention of the therapy was to elicit the dark spot. The therapist utilized parts dissociation therapy to trace the dark spot.

C: What do you see?

PA: I do not see anything.

During the therapy, participant A was unable to detect anything. As a result, the therapist continued the therapy with the healing white light to see whether any distraction occurred. After participant A awoke, she revealed that she saw an image during trance.

PA: At the beginning, I saw a thing moving, like a heart beating. There is a smoky background like a wave behind it.

C: What does the beating heart means to you?

PA: People who are alive have their heart beating.

C: What does it represent?

PA: Alive, life.

C: What is that smoky and wave background to you?

PA: I do not know.

Participant A also revealed she felt the warm sensation during the white light therapy. She defined the white light as the Holy Spirit. She felt that the white light healed her because her flu and headache ceased during the therapy. She also believed that it was the divine who has helped her deal with the dark spot.

Later, participant A was asked to depict the image on a piece of paper. She drew a red heart shape with blue outline and a dark smoky background (as shown in Figure 4.4). While the image was being processed, participant A obtained a better understanding of herself. She signified the heart was her, and that the smoky background was the influence of friends. This was happening because she could not make up her mind; her friends influenced her decisions.

PA: The I (heart) is still very clear although there are so much smoke out there, but the heart is not invaded.

C: What is the main reason the heart is not invaded?

PA: There is a protection on the outer layer of the heart.

C: What is the protection?

PA: God la! I am still able to see myself, not covered by the smoke, I have not lost myself.

C: You are still yourself. What will you do in future?

PA: I will be clearer. The smoke will reduce! Anything that is bad, I will keep a distance.

Participant A has gained the insight of knowing herself as an indecisive and anxious person. She will want to be aware of her weakness and keep reminding herself to handle things more firmly and promptly.



Figure 4.4. Participant A's depiction of the red heart and the dark smoky background.

4.1.1.8 Description of the Eighth Session

Participant A has revealed that she did not see the dark spot anymore during her quiet time. Probably this was due to her transfer to another department, where the environment change was helping her to ease her mood and responsibility. Probably, her courage to face the dark spot was strengthening her to make peace with her inner self. However, participant A treated it as divine intervention since she was consistently praying over it.

In the final session, the design of therapy was mainly focusing on empowering the participant's confidence in her future plan. The timeline therapy and the resource ratchet were used to serve the purpose of therapy.

When the timeline therapy was being applied, participant A was suggestible, although she did not feel anything special during therapy; she was amazed by the automatic response of her unconscious mind to the suggestions of the therapist.

PA: I nodded my head many times! It was automatic, it nodded the head!

C: This is your sub-conscious nodding the head. The suggestions are connected to your future, therefore your sub-conscious responded.

During the process of the resource ratchet, participant A could actually feel the strength of her resources developed for the wellbeing of her future plan. The therapist enhanced an anchoring on her right wrist so that she can press on it whenever she needs to feel the strength of her resources. Participant A's confidence has been raised and empowered throughout the process.

PA: Ah, having the confidence, having the courage, comparatively more than before.

Participant A's self esteem has been empowered and she was happy that she was being refreshed with her future plan. The spirit to activate her charitable social plan has been increased and she plans to pursue it zealously.

4.1.1.9 Summary of the Case Report of Participant A

Participant A was deeply rooted in her Catholic faith. She has experienced divine assistance in her teenage years. Although participant A has encountered some difficulties in her workplace especially the inter-relationship with her colleagues, she realized her spiritual experiences during her teenage years were the great resources for her to cope with her life. The therapist was able to initiate this wonderful resource at the beginning of the psychotherapy sessions.

The spiritual resource was further enhanced as participant A's eyes were open to see the higher power working especially when the healing white light therapy was used during the sessions. Participant A has resonated with the white light as the divine intervention because she has experienced its healing and the soothing power. As she was pondering on the art depictions she had produced, she saw the divine calling her to engage with charitable activities. She would want to sacrifice more time to do charitable work. Her vision in life has clarified. She was looking forward to a colorful and meaningful life. It will probably look like a pizza with many ingredients being put onto it.

Her panic attack symptoms were due to the friction with her colleagues. Participant A was kind and compassionate; she was acting like a caregiver—sacrificing her own interest and conforming to the needs of others. However, her inner being was protesting; it acted out through the panic attack and later as the distraction and the dark spot during trance. As participant A gradually became aware and mindful of herself,

and she was eventually used to meditation and trance, the distraction and the dark spot was diminished. When she saw the vision of the red beating heart and the dark smoky background, she could resonate with the beating heart as herself in the real life situation and the dark smoky background as the outward influence. She became aware of her weaknesses and decided to keep reminding herself to handle things in a firm and prompt manner. She realized that it was the higher power who protected her and gave her the sense of security and confidence throughout the journey of home coming.

Virginia Satir (1982), the originator of Satir Family Therapy has always emphasized that the goal of therapy is to enhance the self in order for one to use its life force to the fullest. Participant A was on her way home to the core of the being. During the psychotherapeutic process, she realized that she has performed certain kinds of values that were coming from within, especially when she found herself improving in enduring the hard core nasty environment in Calcutta. Her endurance was beyond her expectation and she felt the divine was calling her for a certain mission. She believed she can be the angel in building a world of love.

4.1.2 Participant B

Participant B was a thirty six year old Chinese single lady. She worked as a general clerk in a trading company in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. The main purpose she came to see me was for her self-betterment. She intended to join a nunnery in Taiwan; at first she was rejected but now they have accepted her. Thus, the entire psychotherapy journey was seen as a tool to prepare her to join the nunnery.

Participant B has expressed her desire to enhance her personhood in depth. She hoped she could better understand her inner self, perhaps dealing with some of her weaknesses, and reorienting her thoughts or further more integrating her mind, body and

spirit as well. Thereby, she was seen as a challenging participant to the therapist insofar to what extent the therapist could provide in the psychotherapy session to help participant B to achieve her goal in psychotherapy.

4.1.2.1 Description of the First Session

In the first session, sand tray therapy was used to provide an opportunity for participant B to express her unconscious material. Participant B was building a tray of her dreamland, a tray of a vision in life. Her dreamland illustrated an image of harmony and communion (as shown in Figure 4.5).



Figure 4.5. Participant B's sand tray: An image of harmony and communion.

(*Note: C: Therapist, PB: Participant B*).

PB: When I first see the sand tray, I have had an image of harmony. As I was placing the figurines, my mind was filled with the picture of Isaiah 11:6-9, how the lion stays [in] harmony with the lamb, baby was fine even playing in the snake cave. I think I am going after such environment! All the figurines I chose are of moderate character. These are the characters that create harmony in the universe.

C: What is harmony to you in your real life situation?

PB: It is a good relationship between people, accepting each other, not building up the atmosphere of “fighting” spirit but considerate to the needs of others. But in my home, there are quarrelling sometimes, but I do my best not to create hatred among family members. At times, I do get angry, even to the extent of quarrelling. But it will not take too long, the anger released, I am willing to reconcile.

Participant B revealed that her relationship with her sister was not good because of many misunderstandings. Both she and her sister are of different character; she likes to relax most of the time but her sister is hard-working and does most of the housework. Although participant B is older, it appears that her sister acts more mature than her. Participant B was aware of the situation. She was trying to do something about it, to mend the relationship with her sister. Participant B was the one who always initiated reconciliation with her sister but her sister was fed-up with her.

PB: Yes, harmony is not easily built. In my life, there are times I fail to do it. Sometimes it works. That’s why in certain situations, if humbling myself to say sorry can create harmony, I think I will do it.

Meanwhile, participant B emphasized on prayer life. Her Catholic faith was built up since she was young. It was her grandmother who insisted that all the family

members must pray the rosary together after dinner. The act of praying together has impacted her in her adult life. She was able to discern her direction in life with prayer. After years of struggle, she finally tied herself down to follow her inner voice. She has experienced the impossible become possible with divine intervention. She wanted to be a good daughter of the universe and she desired intimacy with the divine. Therefore she chose to join a nunnery. However, she has certain reservations and concerns whether she was able to reach the spiritual state she desired. Sometimes she is undisciplined and stubborn; she hoped that the community life in a nunnery will help her to overcome her weakness.

PB: Easy to say, when I have faith, hope and charity, I am incubating in the light.

Participant B has a great vision for herself. This was her direction in life at the moment. Nevertheless, through her years of struggle, she has evolved to a certain level. She needed to be mindful and down to earth when carrying out her vision in life.

4.1.2.2 Description of the Second Session

The life size portrait was designed in session two to elicit the participant's perception of her "self". The initial aim was to use this design to create a connection between the unknown innermost being and the conscious mind. This idea resonated with participant B's comment at the end of the session.

PB : Upon designing this portrait, I am able to understand myself more. I am able to see myself even more clearly.

Participant B has designed her life size portrait in detail. Thereby she could see herself being compartmentalized in the entire life size portrait and she was able to elaborate the components of herself in detail. As she was immersing herself during the

process of psychotherapy, she was able to get in touch with her inner self. As she was sharing about her portrait, she was also processing. There were some realizations taking place.

PB: If I were to choose, my priority will be God. No matter what it is, I want God to be the priority. But in reality, my character does not show that God is the priority. I like to watch movies, and many times I have chosen to watch a movie and have forgotten about prayer, neglected prayer. My present character does not show God is the priority in my life.

C: You are saying your character doesn't show God is the priority. What character do you think shows God is the priority?

PB: At least must concentrate during prayer. I do not force myself live like a saint. Anyway, I like to watch movie is also a blessing, but not to the extent of letting my desire go beyond God. I hope to love God more, at least I can feel I am taking God seriously.

Participant B was trying to balance her priority between God and her desire to watch movies. As she was in favor of talking about God, the higher power, she was certain that when she was taking her prayer life seriously, the God of Host will lead her. She has experienced God's providence when she did a program for her friend. During that period, she was able to discipline herself and was surprised she could finish the program on time without delaying.

PB: What I have done so far is not enough, though I am doing it. For example, when I teach catechism class, I encourage the children to talk more, and give their opinions. I am teaching Holy Communion class, if I keep on talking, the children will not understand who Jesus is. When I pray to God for guidance, the phrase of "listen more, talk less" strikes me. I found the insight to teach with

“listen more and talk less”. I asked the children to write reflection diary. I also discovered “listen more and talk less” is an effective tool for evangelization.

Participant B treated “listen more and talk less” as a concept that could keep her going to make changes. Participant B has a deep realization of this concept. Perhaps it was there already in her sub-conscious, but it was during the session that she prompted the dynamic within herself.

C: As I listen to you, it seems that discipline and planning for a program sometimes are conflicting against each other. If there is really a conflict, what are you going to do?

PB: I need to depend on the environment to mold me, so that I can be more disciplined. I am aware that I am losing myself when I live my worldly life. I am letting myself enjoy whatever I desire. But the life in the nunnery has its discipline. That’s the reason I want to join the nunnery, there is discipline inside there. It is through it I can correct myself to take God seriously.

Participant B has actually experienced the struggle as to whether or not to choose a married life or a single life. She was aware that she could not stand at a junction and not move anywhere. She remembered it was at age thirty that she attended a talk that helped her gain insight to look into her past experiences; she did it and she was touched. It was there and then she decided to join a nunnery. No matter what has happened, she needs to experience life in a nunnery. She has tried experiencing the life in the nunnery twice. She found that it was helpful in disciplining herself especially her prayer life. She has finally made her decision to join the nunnery in Taiwan.

Although she has made her decision, she has some components within her that needed her attention. One of those was her habit of talking. She described herself as a talkative person. She was aware of it and she would want to listen more and talk less.

4.1.2.3 Description of the Third Session

Session three mainly emphasized participant B's resources that have been influenced by her significant others. The wheel of influence was used as a tool to achieve the goal of therapy. Participant B described that the person who influenced her greatly was her grandmother. Her grandmother's life was the model of her life in which faith was deeply rooted in her early years. Her grandmother always reminded her not to leave God.

C: From where your grandma was, what have you discovered about your resources? What have you gained?

PB: Faith.

It was this faith that carried her through her childhood years of sorrow and difficulties. Her mother died when she was two years old. She could feel that the higher power was accompanying and consoling her throughout her childhood. Participant B also revealed her character of laziness, freedom, indiscipline and self-absorption were the products of her childhood and past experiences. She realized her weakness when she was given the opportunity to join a number of self-development courses. She has picked up the awareness and has since then begun to change. Her ability to change came from her prayer life and consistent self-introspection.

C: What is the greatest factor that has helped you to change?

PB: Self reflection. I will contemplate and pray. I am willing to listen to the word of God and change myself. I want to put into action, this helps me to change.

During the psychotherapy session, participant B also pointed out that humility will be another characteristic that can help her to overcome her problem. Participant B subsequently revealed her paradoxical way of thinking. Cognitively, she was aware that

she always perceived things from both positive and negative aspects. This has been the style she utilized in order to keep her balance. She knew people found it difficult to communicate with her. Hence she preferred to listen more and talk less.

PB: I will adjust myself. In the last session when I shared by life size portrait, I mentioned about listen more and talk less in order to communicate with people.

The answer coming from them, not me, somehow or other, I must let people talk, I listen more.

Toward the end of the session, participant B again emphasized the action to be taken in order to make a change, apart from surrendering everything to God.

C: Actually, you have the awareness, it will facilitate you to change and make adjustment.

PB: Yes, plus action. If I always pray and depend on God, I will take action, one hundred percent action. Not I taking action, but the Holy Spirit guided me to take action.

Participant B was aware of her situation. She talked about her anxiety to go to Taiwan. She did not know whether she would be able to adapt to the weather. Another concern was whether she is able to listen and obey her superiors. She was aware of her past experiences and her free way of living somehow will have an impact on her. She was mindful to prepare herself for the future endeavor.

4.1.2.4 Description of the Fourth Session

Parts party was used as the psychotherapeutic tool in session four. In the human ego state, there is a compartmentalized component that can be integrated to form positive images in participant B's personality. In the process of transforming and integrating,

the negative parts will connect with the positive parts to form an adjusted positive ego state of being.

Participant B has ensured her positive parts or resources and has grouped them into six groups. The first group of resources was simplicity, kind and God loving. The second group of resources was frugal, observe rules and regulations and to be morally prudent. The third group of resources was seeking divine providence. The fourth group was humility, positive thinking and enthusiastic. The fifth group of resources was forgiving and finding space for solitude. The sixth group of resources was confidence, gifted and dedicated when given a task.

Participant B has listed her three main negative parts that needed adjustment. The first one was daydreaming on a worldly happy life. The therapist has helped her to reframe it into a positive phrase: understanding humanity. The second one was egoistic on certain things, which has been reframed to the seriousness to upgrade herself. The third one was her forgetfulness to keep a promise, which has been reframed into the heart of no intention to turn people down but to zealously use her gift to offer service to others.

Participant B was asked to verbally say aloud her positive parts after reframing her negative parts. This exercise was used as a foreplay exercise of hypnotherapy on parts integration. After the parts integration, she felt affirmed and strengthened. She told the therapist she felt the out of space sensation during the process of parts integration.

PB: If I continue to focus on my positive parts and adjusting my negative parts, I believe I will be better. I think I need to strengthen my resources, instill them onto my consciousness and also my inner unconscious mind. I need to do it continuously.

C: Right, when you pray or meditate, you can do it to adjust yourself.

PB: Yes, right. I feel good in today's session. At least I am able to see positivity from the negative parts. I think the positive images are very important because when I continuously doing it, I need to look at those positive images. If I want to use this in Taiwan, do you think it is effective?

C: Yes, try it. You have already known how to use your resources to do it!

PB: Every positive parts not only coming from my mind, it should also come from my heart, because my mind is not strong enough to push me into action. My heart does. Hm ...very good.

The therapist also took the opportunity to encourage participant B to be more positive instead of standing in the middle to weigh her positive and negative thinking. The therapist reminded participant B to develop her positive parts in order to enhance her inner self.

4.1.2.5 Description of the Fifth Session

A self-mandala from the Satir concept was used as a tool to help participant B become more aware and realize how all parts within the self are relating and interacting with each other all the time. The self-mandala consists of eight resources. They are the physical part, the intellectual part, the emotional part, the sensual part, the interacting part and communication part, the nutritional part, the context of the environment and the spiritual part. Participant B needed to introspect within her inner world while observing the connection; whereby at the same time she responded to the messages that occurred between her resources.

Among the eight resources, on a scale of zero to ten, participant B has rated the spiritual part, the contextual part and the intellectual part highest. The lowest in the

scale were the emotional part, the sensual part and the nutritional part. She hoped to adjust her emotional part by sharing her feelings with people.

Participant B revealed that her parents allowed her to be herself. However, she felt she needed to mend and build her relationship with her younger sister. Since they were small they have not been on good terms. Both of them have strong characters; her younger sister expected her to be “the sister”.

C: What are the criteria of the elder sister?

PB: It is simply “do it”. When I have promised something, I must do it, firstly, building up the trust. Secondly, I do not trouble her. When I promised to empty my room before I leave for Taiwan, I must fulfill the promise. I feel that I must restrain myself, she needed the acknowledgement that she is mature enough to handle life.

Participant B was well aware of the things she ought to do at this point in time. She acknowledged the relationship needed time to grow for the better. It is a process. This was the same as her spiritual journey. The spiritual journey is a journey as well. The spiritual part was making her alive and vibrant. She believed if she works with her heart, it will bear fruits.

C: When you look at yourself as a whole, what is the greatest value?

PB: I am moving towards my real self. My aim is to become a good daughter of God. I dream of becoming the “little flower of Theresa”, emphasize on morality, walking towards the path of loving kindness, creating a better me, an ideal me.

C: If there is a depiction, what would you put inside?

PB: The loving heart of Jesus, the image of God, the model of saints, my normal charity work, the service I wish to provide, the communion relationships of people and the kingdom of God.

C: You want to put a lot of things, how long do you think you can achieve your aim?

PB: I must depend on God, no time limit, it is alright even until the time of my death.

C: You are saying this is a lifetime journey?

PB: Yes, it is the direction. What I have mentioned regarding my weakness, will evolve gradually. Time of trials is a good reminder.

Participant B has the faith that after much trial and hardship, she will eventually achieve her goal in life. She has a very vast goal ahead in life. During the session, the counselor was unable to explore all the eight resources of the self mandala with participant B. This session was an educational introduction for participant B to know her different parts and to use her resources subsequently so that the inner integration process will take place concurrently as the resources arrive at the realm of connection.

4.1.2.6 Description of the Sixth Session

In this session participant B wrote down the significant events in her life on her timeline. She described that the turning point in her life was at the age of thirty. She reflected on her life and found her desire to seek spiritual wisdom. She felt that her happiness was to seek a solid spiritual life. This was the conclusion of her life journey.

Participant B revealed that she had undergone very difficult times during her twenties. She was nearly broke. Her whole being was at a sorrowful stage. She described herself as having lived like a beggar.

C: Life was frustrated, live like a beggar. How did you manage to get through?

PB: At that time, it was simply accepting my fate. I try to be thrifty. At least at the end of the month, I still have some penny left. But it was not long that I have got through.

C: What are the descriptive words following you until you are an adult?

PB: Sexual desire. I cannot tell you the detail, but I have carried it until now.

Very often I want to feel the physical excitement. It was my first loving relationship, hard to forget. Anyway, I have let go 90 percent of its impact.

Participant B was grateful to the higher power because all her weaknesses, her sorrow and difficulties were dissolved gradually after she started her work in church. As she was exposed to more self-development courses, she became mature and coped well with her life. She realized she needed to love herself, she has learned to appreciate herself. Her locus of control has turned from outside to the inside. She was able to accept herself and keep herself equipped with skills that enhanced her “self”.

Nevertheless at present, the only challenge she faces is with physical sexual excitement. She believes a disciplined life in the nunnery would help to weaken the thoughts for sexual excitement. She has aimed to become a good daughter of the universe, she has put God ahead of her sexual excitement. While the therapist was doing hypnotherapy to strengthen her ego to take control over her sexual desire, participant B fell asleep. She could not tell the outcome of the process, but she felt physically relaxed.

PB: I fell asleep, very good rest. I do not know how much it heals. Thank you.

C: You were resting.

PB: I did not sleep well last night, I need rest. Anyway, thank you very much.

Participant B has progressed throughout the process of psychotherapy. She was clear about her direction in life. She revealed that she was embracing the zeal to become a lovely daughter of the universe.

4.1.2.7 Description of the Seventh Session

Participant B described herself as a ship that was sailing on the sea (as shown in Figure 4.6). Sometimes the sea was rough and she tended to be in a frantic rush. But she knew how to cope with it. Many times, the ship sailed on a smooth sea. At times, when her faith was not strong, she was trapped by her human desire.



Figure 4.6. Participant B's depiction of herself: I am a sailing ship.

The ships, which participant B has drawn, symbolized her human self and her spiritual self. The ships were simple but they were faith based. The flag, which hung on one of the ships, signified where she is going. She also mentioned about her heart; it

was inside the drawing. Her heart was near to her paradise, her dreamland of happiness, to join the community in a nunnery in Taiwan.

C: If the drawing could speak, what do you think it would speak to you?

PB: This is me, my normal self, I dream of becoming an open-minded me. The storm in the drawing is a trap that reminds me of the journey I am taking, I need to be cautious and find a way out if I face difficulties. But trials and temptations in a nunnery is less because the daily self-reflection will help me to overcome my weakness.

C: If you were to continue drawing this depiction, what would you do?

PB: I will draw only one ship, sailing on the sea. Sailing with the direction of the mind, even if there is no wind, it still can move. I will only draw one ship.

C: What will you put inside the ship?

PB: Crucifix, my faith foundation is on Jesus. It is a simple ship, I am simple. I will not put many things inside. But I will put a flag to announce my coming, straight forward and not shy.

Participant B revealed that the depiction she has drawn about herself was her journey in life. It was simply an authentic her. It was, it is and it will be a movement for her to subsequently move towards the direction of the divine. It will be her life developmental portrait. She has given the depiction a theme: “I am a sailing ship”.

4.1.2.8 Summary of the Case Report of Participant B

Participant B desired to become a good daughter of the universe. She had revealed her vision in life with an image of harmony and communion. She has been struggling between human desire and divine calling. She was aware that she wanted to become good; at the same time she was not on good terms with her sister. She was determined

to mend the relationship with her sister before leaving for Taiwan to join a nunnery. Anyway, she had qualitatively developed to her own becoming by the end of the seventh session.

As she moved on with the psychotherapy sessions, she was able to look into the various parts of herself. She was aware of her human weaknesses; she knew she needed a disciplined life in order to consistently practice self introspection. She realized she needed a serious prayer life to keep her moving toward her goal. She was affirmed of her choice to become a nun, as she wanted a disciplined spiritual life. She would like her life to be a little flower of Theresa. She believed that a disciplined spiritual life will purify her human desire.

The feeling of transcendence occurred when she was engaged with the process of parts integration. She could see her positive resources in the midst of negativities. She realized it was not enough for the mind to be aware and comprehend the things that happened within her, so she deliberately appealed to her heart to be strong enough to reinforce her into good deeds. She was connecting with her inner parts in a manner that has inspired her, and she intends to practice the parts integration more often in Taiwan.

Participant B has depicted herself as a sailing ship moving toward the direction of the divine, the ship has signified her life development. The depiction is synchronized with her life experiences whereby she has gone through many ups-and-downs; it is the transforming process of her life journey.

4.1.3 Participant C

Participant C was a forty-one-year old Chinese single lady. She worked as a customer service clerk in one of the water filter companies in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. She was staying with her uncle and cousins in a house near to her workplace.

She did not have a good relationship with her father. Participant C was able to differentiate herself from her family. She did not like her father gossiping, being lazy, gambling and taking liquor. She seldom goes home because she did not feel warmth and welcome at home. Her mother left the family when she was twelve. Since then, she has been staying with her grandmother, together with two other immediate families. She gained the love of a mother from her grandmother and her aunties.

Participant C's family inherited the sickness of thalassemia. Her two elder sisters died many years ago from thalassemia. She felt pain when her second sister died, because she was the one who stayed with her, working together as a seamstress. She left her profession as a seamstress since her sister's death. Although participant C did not have a strong family tie, she found support and love from her aunties and cousins.

She came for psychotherapy because she has been hurt by one of her cousins. She took her words seriously. The primary goal of psychotherapy was to clean her mind and heart from anger and sadness. The secondary goal of psychotherapy was to prepare herself to live well while facing death as she was diagnosed with thalassemia at an intermediate stage.

4.1.3.1 Description of the First Session

Participant C has been hurt verbally by her cousins. She felt wronged as they did not inform her about some events in the family. It seems they were not respecting her and she felt humiliated. The pain and hurt has drained her; she felt tired and tense.

(Note: C: Therapist, PC: Participant C).

C: How do you feel right now?

PC: Very painful.

C: Apart from painful, do you have other feelings?

PC: Feeling wronged. That's all.

The therapist decided to apply hypnotherapy to ease the participant's emotional hurt. A relaxation technique and the healing white light script were used during therapy. When participant C awoke, she reported feeling more comfortable and tranquil.

C: How do you feel throughout the process of therapy?

PC: Ah! Very tranquil, experiencing a tranquil state of mind. I can hear birds chirping, I can feel I am in a comfortable place.

C: Implying on the pain and the feeling of wronged, how is your state of mind now?

PC: Better.

C: Is there anything in your mind during the process of therapy?

PC: No, blank.

It was strange and amazing that she could hear the birds chirping, as there were no birds in the actual scene. At this point of time, the participant was puzzled to hear the birds chirping during trance.

4.1.3.2 Description of the Second Session

Participant C elaborated on the people who have played the role of significant others in her life. First, she shared about her father, an alcoholic who would beat her and her siblings when he was drunk. Participant C noticed her bad temperament whenever she talked to her father. Because of her consistent prayer and the guidance from her aunt, her temperament has improved and she was able to cope with her family problems. When she heard her aunt gossiping, she would advise her not to judge others.

C: Regarding this matter, what are your resources?

PC: Probably my faith!

Participant C also revealed that she was able to see through and let go of many things in her life. One of them was when she was faced with the unjust treatment at her workplace. Her ability to let go and not bother helped her to get through her days.

Participant C was grateful to her aunt in Johor because this aunt was considerate to her and her siblings partly because of their thalassemia. The love she gave participant C was a great support for her to move on with life.

C: Your relationship with your aunty is good, what influence do you think she has on you?

PC: She is considerate. She always gives me the message of letting go of things that hurt. You earned your own money, you can do what you think is right!

Participant C is also aware of her sickness; when she was working as a seamstress she was very hard working. Her elder sister's death made her realize her life may be short and that her body may not be able to endure the tough working life.

PC: I do [not] want to stay on as a seamstress. It is taxing. My life will be shorter if I keep on the tough life. I want some comfort. A common ordinary life is good enough for me.

C: When you were saying you are not going to be hard on yourself, what have you discovered?

PC: Probably I thought of my sickness. I have earned quite a lot for the past few years. I need not be so hard on myself.

Participant C revealed that the two significant others who have molded her at her young age were her late grandmother and her late aunt. Their faith in God and their unselfish love have touched her and have given a good impact in her life.

C: How has this impacted you for who you are today?

PC: I can see how they encourage me. I will see how I can change myself.

C: How are you changed?

PC: I am considerate.

C: As you look at your resources: self adjusting, faith, see through and let go, composed, acceptance, humble to listen to advice, self awareness and considerate toward others. As you look at your resources, which one do you think will help you to resolve your friction with your family members?

PC: Self adjustment.

C: How are you going to do it?

PC: I think they do not mean to hurt me. I need to adjust myself, slowly let go of the friction.

The final part of the psychotherapy process involved hypnotherapy. The therapist utilized all the resources to strengthen participant C. Participant C felt tranquil and comfortable after the therapy session.

4.1.3.3 Description of the Third Session

In the third session, forgiveness therapy was applied to ease participant C's psychological and emotional heaviness. The therapist explained to participant C the importance of forgiveness.

The forgiveness therapy involved the script as below:

(Mention the one participant want to forgive), I forgive you for being with me (mention the event which has taken place). I am willing to forgive you. I would like to bless you, I wish you live well. Peace be with you.

I forgive myself for (what I want to say to myself). I am willing to forgive myself, I would like to bless myself. Peace be with me.

Participant C followed the therapist to say aloud the forgiveness script. There were a total of four relationships that the participant needed to reconcile, her mother,

father, aunt and cousin. When the therapist led participant C to forgive her aunt and cousin, she felt pain in her ears and shoulder, numbness in her leg. The therapist induced a relaxation technique incorporated with hypnotherapy to ease the participant's situation. Subsequently, the therapist continued with the ego strengthening by using the healing white light script. The white light flowed through every part of her body. Participant C felt better and said she was back to normal after the therapy.

PC: Hm...during therapy, I heard the birds chirping.

C: What does that mean?

PC: Bring me to the white light to relax.

C: How do you feel?

PC: Ok, much much better now.

Participant C has experienced a certain amount of deliverance from the repressed negative emotions. At least at this point in time, she was free from the bondage of repressed negative emotions.

4.1.3.4 Description of the Fourth Session

Participant C's life size portrait was very simple. She liked music especially church hymnal, which she always used to reflect on her life. Whenever she was touched by the lyrics, her inner self would evolve and she found her temperament has changed to a better scale; meanwhile her perception towards certain things also shifted towards the positive scale.

C: What happened when you do your reflection?

PC: The insights came gradually, the change happened subsequently.

C: What are the aspects you have felt change?

PC: My temperament and thoughts.

As participant C's paradigm shifted, she began to accept the people who had hurt her; she felt that they did not do it on purpose; probably they did not have the intention to hurt her. When her thoughts became more positive, her temperament too subsequently changed and she felt comfort in her heart. The freedom within resonated with her interest to travel around. She signified it with a butterfly that was flying freely.

During the session, she confirmed her resources by emphasizing certain qualities, such as a sympathetic heart toward the marginalized; she was generous in helping those who were in need of either financial or moral support. She did not like to exaggerate her doings. She was humble and confident in making the right judgments. She disciplined herself to complete the tasks given to her. The qualities she had were compatible with the weaknesses that she needed to control or overcome. She was coping quite well whenever she felt the anger. Sometimes she will divert her attention by watching television. Participant C was confident about resolving her problems.

4.1.3.5 Description of the Fifth Session

This session was concentrating on a complete deliverance of the hurt participant C has encountered in her family. The technique of EMDR (Eye Movement Dissociation and Reprocessing) was used to serve the psychotherapy goal.

Participant C was asked to decide on a node, she has decided on her cousin's awful face. Her negative belief was brought up: "they did not care about my feelings". As her belief was brought up, she felt pain and disappointment; she also felt the discomfort in her heart. However she was confident she could overcome the problem.

The therapist started the left and right eye movement. Initially, participant C felt the pain sensation in her head. After a few times of EMDR, she felt release of the feeling of hatred toward her cousin. Her heart felt comforted and liberated.

C: What is the image of your cousin now?

PC: There is joy, comfort and relaxed.

C: What about your confidence?

PC: I have the confidence.

The therapist subsequently applied the healing white light to strengthen participant C's ego state. The therapist also pseudo-orientated her for the future.

C: How was the therapeutic process?

PC: I heard the birds chirping.

C: How long?

PC: Two times. The first time not long, the second time was very long. When you were suggesting the white light, the birds started to chirp.

C: How do you feel?

PC: Comfort and relaxed.

It was strength on the part of participant C for being able to imagine the white light with the chirping of the birds. It has become the resource for her to relax herself whenever she wishes and it was a blessing for her too.

4.1.3.6 Description of the Sixth Session

Participant C was revealing her place of incubation with the arrangement of figurines (as shown in Figure 4.7). It took place by the seaside. She was resting under a pavilion and doing her reflection. Through the figurines, she saw people reconciling. This was touching to her.

PC: I hope I can reconcile with my aunty and cousin one day.

C: When do you think will be the day?

PC: Should be very fast from now.



Figure 4.7. Participant C's place of incubation.

Participant C continued to relax; she could hear the sound of music around her and the birds chirping. The wave of the sea was washing her tiredness and her worries. As she was continuing to reflect, she was able to sense the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the sound of birds chirping.

PC: I heard the birds chirping, it brings comfort. I pray to the Holy Spirit to heal my hurt.

C: What is exactly this Holy Spirit?

PC: I feel the Holy Spirit heals me. He is guiding me to go back to the Lord, closer to Jesus.

C: When you talk about going back close to Jesus, what will that situation be?

PC: Happiness.

C: Where are you now in this journey?

PC: I think there is still a distance, before I can get closer to Jesus.

C: What would you do to get close to Jesus?

PC: Prayer, attending Sunday masses, receiving the Holy Communion. These will help me to get close to Jesus.

Participant C was looking for the divine to ease her hurt. At the same time, she desired to get close to the divine because she could sense the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The therapist felt that it could be her awareness of her sickness of thalassemia, which deep within herself she knew she could be called by the Lord anytime to rest in peace.

4.1.3.7 Description of the Seventh Session

Participant C revealed her planning for the future in the seventh session. She thought of having her own house, and living a simple life. Apart from her daily routine, she hoped she could give service to the needy. She intended to do some social visiting to the hospital, jail and also families who need aid. She would like to start her ministry through the Legion of Mary, a community in the Catholic Church, which has placed the visiting role as an important task for its members.

C: Up to the present, are you a member of the Legion of Mary?

PC: Not yet.

C: When do you intend to join the Legion of Mary?

PC: I am now staying in Cheras. It is quite far to go to Petaling Jaya to join the Legion of Mary. I probably settle down with my job first in Petaling Jaya. Then I will move to Petaling Jaya. If I stay in Petaling Jaya, I will have more time. I

can involve myself in social services. If I want to serve the Lord, I need to sacrifice my time and put things into action.

C: What do you intend to do when you take up the visiting role?

PC: I remember the Lord always asks us to serve. I feel that my health does not allow me to do much. But I can take up a simple task such as visiting the sick, consoling them, encourage them, praying for them, asking the Lord to ease their pain. I have gone through a lot with thalassemia. I can understand them.

C: What was actually helping you to go through?

PC: My mum left me, my dad need to work. I cannot depend on my aunty, I need to be independent. I persistently carried my own baggage. I am able to stay until today, I felt God has accompanying me throughout the process.

C: How?

PC: He listens to my prayer. I pray to God to reduce my pain gradually. Now I realized that my sickness is lighter than the other thalassemia patients. I feel that God is supporting me. He is helping me to ease my burden.

Participant C has the heart to serve and help the needy. But she needs to settle down in Petaling Jaya. Perhaps she was confident with the support group in Petaling Jaya. She insisted on moving over to Petaling Jaya before she could start anything. Toward the end of the session, hypnotherapy was used to strengthen her intention to serve in future. She felt energized after the therapy.

C: How do you feel?

PC: Comfort. When I closed my eyes, I feel the brightness in my eyes. The light is in front of me.

C: When the light is in front of you, how do you feel?

PC: Compatibly more comfortable. But it's get over very fast.

C: What did the light signify?

PC: God strengthens me with faith, hope and charity.

C: What about your body sensation?

PC: My heart is contented and firm.

C: What about your intention to serve?

PC: I think I am able to handle it.

Participant C indeed has the confidence to write a new chapter in her life when she moves to Petaling Jaya. She can be the role model for thalassemia patients for her courage and her perseverance in life.

4.1.3.8 Summary of the Case Report of Participant C

Participant C wanted to be freed from the feeling of hurt. The forgiveness therapy and the EMDR (eye movement dissociation and reprocessing) therapy were able to ease her hurt and helped her to reconcile with her cousin and her aunt. In the process of therapy, participant C reported often hearing the chirping sound of the birds whenever she was in trance. She associated the chirping sound with the manifestations of the higher power. She could further relate the chirping sound with the Holy Spirit. This was perhaps connected to her faith foundation since childhood. She was also seeing bright light in front of her eyes that reinforced her faith, hope and charity. By the end of the sixth session, this experience had strengthened her faith in the divine. She could see herself still having some distance from the divine. She will sacrifice her time more on prayer and religious rituals to enhance her faith and get closer to the divine.

Participant C was aware of her sickness. She wanted an ordinary life that is not taxing on her. Meanwhile she would like to serve in the way she can by visiting the sick and the needy. She would want to give her free time to charitable services such as

visiting patients in the hospital. Her thalassemia illness is not an obstacle to her will of love.

4.1.4 Participant D

Participant D was a thirty five year old Chinese single lady. She worked as an Amway Distributor in Petaling Jaya. She has been enthusiastically involved in Amway activities. She revealed that by joining Amway she has the freedom in planning her time and space. Sometimes, she will join the activities organized by the Bahai community.

She obtained her postgraduate diploma in human resource and accounting from an Australian university. She once went camping into the jungle with a group of friends in Australia. She had her first experience of the universal energy when she sat in front of the waterfall in the jungle there; she described it as being very soothing and self-fulfilling.

When participant D returned to Malaysia, she felt a heavy burden upon her shoulder when she stayed with her parents. Her brother was working in Singapore. She found herself trapped between her desire to be herself and conforming to be her mother's good daughter. Somehow she decided to be herself, but she has to endure her mother's nagging. Her father was suffering from Alzheimer's. She felt that it was her obligation to take good care of her father.

Participant D's intention for psychotherapy was to eliminate or reduce her emotional discomfort and her negative thinking. She would like to learn the method of managing her emotion and she would like to know herself better as well. Besides, she was interested in gaining more spiritual insights.

4.1.4.1 Description of the First Session

In the first session, Participant D worked with figurines and revealed her dream by arranging the figurines in a sand tray. She revealed that the sand tray represented the idea of a daily living condition that she desired with soothing, interesting and colorful environment with no worries of survival. She was emphasizing freedom of money, time, thoughts and expression. Nevertheless, she was still striving and working hard to achieve her dream.

(Note: C: Therapist, PD: Participant D).

C: Life can be colorful, what do you desire?

PD: Money and time are available. No worries for survival. No time constraint.

Life can be very simple. I can fully enjoy the moment, live at the moment.

Participant D was aiming to achieve her financial goal in Amway distribution. She was able to contribute herself to society with her financial freedom. However, she was also revealing that she needed the peace of mind and the sense of security, which could be achieved by doing meditation and seeking psychotherapy. Apart from talking about her dream, participant D was revealing her desire of creativity and simplicity in dealing with her problem, managing her emotions and depression. She hoped psychotherapy would be able to help her to change.

Participant D was actually heading towards the direction of her dream. In the midst of her journey, she found that she needed to find ways to energize herself to deal with her family matters. She had once experienced the universal energy in the jungle in Australia. She was looking for it and she was still finding a substitution that could give her the life force.

C: How do you cope when you are lacking the energy?

PD: Alone time, watching Discovery Channel, interesting and informative movie which rarely involved emotion. Sometimes I read self-enriching books. It gave me a realization to shift my perception, such as “Reality is Our Perception of Reality.” When I understood the moral behind it, I am more patient and neutral when dealing with people. My body feels lighter, not so heavy.

Participant D was carrying some expectation on cultivating creative ways in dealing with her problems.

C: What causes you to carry that expectation?

PD: The feeling of restrained at home.

C: How does your home restrain you?

PD: I cannot do what I like at home. I do not have the freedom. The interpersonal relationship became complex. I don't feel like getting involved.

C: What do you think could help you?

PD: At least I am hoping. There will be one day I am creative enough to deal with the problems or simplify them.

Participant D was still striving for absolution to her problems during this psychotherapy session. She has her expectation for being in the psychotherapy room. She revealed that she has found a nearby assistance (the psychotherapy sessions) that could help her. She felt safe and comfortable though she was still seeking a solution. Participant D was exploring her Self; she wanted to know how she is going to handle her life better to her expectation.

4.1.4.2 Description of the Second Session

The life size portrait of participant D was portraying her whole being at the present moment. The portrait was making the invisible visible for participant D. Participant D was amazed to see herself through the life size portrait (as shown in Figure 4.8). There were realizations and affirmations that strengthened her to move on with life. When she looked at the portrait, she realized there were a lot of things of which she was unaware. She would like to use an interesting way to explore the unaware areas, such as the negative parts in her, and find ways to interestingly deal with them as opposed to dismissing them.

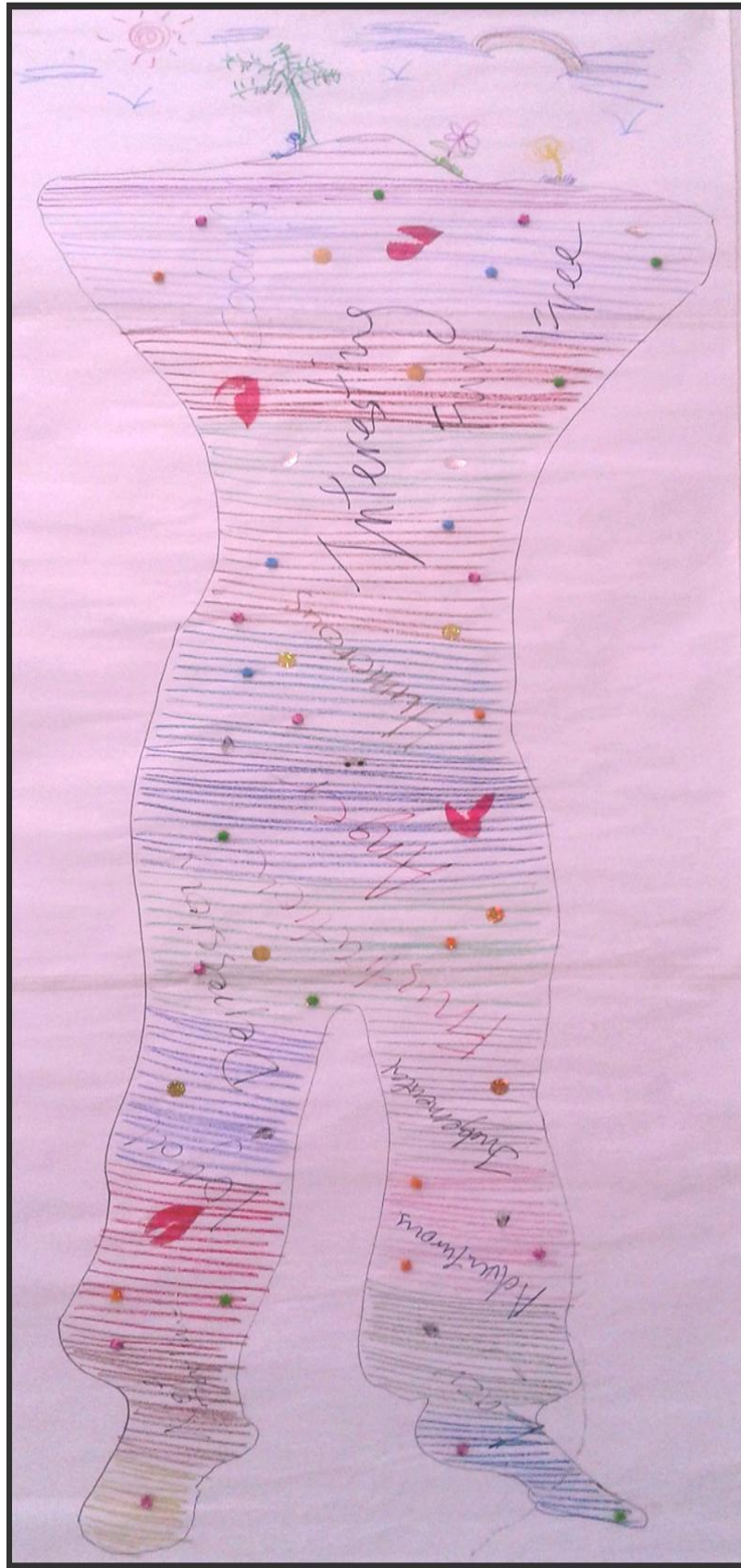


Figure 4.8. Participant D's life size portrait.

C: What have you discovered?

PD: I was avoiding because I thought there were no hope at all. I was letting the negative parts consume me. When I clung to the negative feelings, I felt safer. But now I realized these are only a part of me. It is not my whole. When I am down with negative feelings, if I am using an interesting way to understand it, to deal with it, on the contrary I am able to extricate from it. I am able to change myself.

Participant D has realized she must deal with her negative parts in order to change qualitatively; as well as realizing that there are parts of her that are reluctant to change and she must accept them as they are. As participant D has befriended her negative parts, she felt more comfort. In the process of moving upwards to her place of incubation (located at the top of the portrait), she admitted there would be hardship, distraction and heartbreak along the way, but she would deal with it in an interesting and fun way.

C: You have realized something, how do you feel now?

PD: My heart is not so heavy anymore.

C: You were saying you want your portrait to have a three dimension feeling. What does that 3D mean to you?

PD: Humans are alive being, they are not dead. Many things can be flexible.

C: What have you discovered about yourself?

PD: I have a choice to be flexible. I can use different but creative methods to achieve an outcome that I want.

Participant D has admitted she has many resources, but she has not excavated them. Because of her negative thoughts and feelings, they have been side tracked and she would like to look into her precious resources. Meanwhile, participant D has also experienced the feeling of goodness which came from outside. She realized she needed

those incentives to motivate her to move on with her journey to obtain her goal at the top of the portrait. She actually has broken through some challenges and she saw herself on the way to her goal. She began to become aware that nothing is perfect so she chose to accept reality. She wants to improve herself to face her fear of failure.

4.1.4.3 Description of the Third Session

Participant D revealed her relationship with her mother in the third session. When she revealed about her mother's injustice, she felt depressed because there was nothing she could do. She decided to ignore her mother as a coping mechanism.

PD: The fastest solution is to move out of the house, but I cannot do that!

C: What is good about you?

PD: Empathy, at least I take their feelings into consideration.

As participant D expressed her concern not to hurt her parents, she would not move out of her house. She would continue staying with her parents, which means she would struggle within herself with the frustration of not being understood in her family.

It was obvious her mother was very controlling. Participant D has been practicing ignorance and self-talking when her mother starts to nag at her. Since she came for psychotherapy, she began to observe her feelings more than the events that were happening at home. She was actually practicing self-awareness in order to cope with her current situation.

PD: I will always remind myself. I need to be aware, at times I forgot to remind myself, I will be in the loop.

C: How do you remind yourself?

PD: Focus, concentrate, ignore, ignore, take a deep breath. I feel better than before.

C: As you are talking about it, how do you feel now?

PD: Not comfortable.

C: You can now concentrate on your feeling of discomfort.

PD: (pause) When I concentrate, the feeling gone.

C: You are getting in touch with your feeling, how do you feel now?

PD: My heart not so tight. The feeling of freedom, lighter, it is neutral.

C: Now you focus again, breathe in and breathe out, and focus again.

PD: (pause) Cleaner now, not so much dirt, not as complicated as just now.

Participant D has learned to be mindful with her thoughts and feelings. The therapist encouraged the participant to practice it more often so that it would be a habit programmed in and automatically take place when participant D needs assistance.

As participant D talked about herself when her mother was around, she realized her mental restriction and mental control were coming from her mother. She was aware that the impact coming from her mother was greater than that from her father. She knew she has the fear of people gossiping about her and the fear of being rejected. She also revealed that the fear was caused by insecurity within her.

C: Because of your mum's mindset, she treats you this way. You understand her?

PD: Exactly 100 percent.

C: You are now seeing the impact, what do you think you should do?

PD: I don't want to be like her.

C: Can you?

PD: Yes.

The therapist then decided to use the healing white light to ease the participant's feeling of fear. After the induction and deepener, the suggestion of resolving the fear and insecurity was brought up in the process of therapy. Participant D felt more relaxed after the therapy; she said her heart was not as tight as before.

When the therapist asked participant D to look at her resources, she acknowledged that her self-awareness has helped her to accept the grey area in her life.

C: When you look at your resources, how do you feel?

PD: I need to use them. It will be a waste if I do not use them. I feel that I need to continue adventuring and humorous, so that I can live a joyful life.

Participant D is a practical person. She is enforcing herself to use her resources to obtain her goals before she could pat her back and appreciate herself.

4.1.4.4 Description of the Fourth Session

Participant D was actually feeling a contradiction within herself since session three. She has experienced an inner transformation from her negative emotions such as judgmental and depressing to the positive emotions such as being peaceful and composed. She was confused with the transformation because without the negative feelings and judgmental thoughts, she felt she was losing her identity!

PD: It is not bad. But it is lack of excitement. Previously I was up and down, now I am better, peaceful. Not feeling sad and not feeling very happy. If I can feel happier, that will be better.

C: If you are to choose your emotion, which will you choose?

PD: This (peaceful) plus a little excitement.

C: What do you think have helped you to transform?

PD: Should be your sessions. I have understood some things. You have explained to me some things. Should be my perceptions have changed. Accept the things I cannot change. When my mum triggers my anger, I will immediately observe my feelings and not focusing on her words. The feelings were fast dissolved. I felt better.

The paradigm shift of thoughts and the transformation of the inner feelings have enhanced the sense of gratification in participant D. She has begun to learn to forgive herself and others. The transformation was putting good things together. She was looking at the world differently; she felt there was hope around even with the grey area still existing. She exhibited more positive thinking and she felt the freedom in her ability and her heart.

C: What do you mean by the freedom of ability and freedom in the heart?

PD: Freedom of heart is I don't need to lock myself in the grey area. I can actually change my mood. I am able to do something, to complete a task. The freedom of ability has been reinforced. I have improved and get through the things I thought I can't. Thus, I have the freedom of ability.

C: What are the connections between the two freedoms?

PD: It is a good cycle. A positive and feedback loop.

Participant D was analytical; she could figure out the positive cycle that was bringing change, from a positive perception on certain matters, it will bring positive change to her emotions and her ability to cope with life. She has been aware that she was able to react rationally to the event that triggered her, and control her negative emotions and negative thoughts as well.

PD: Miraculously strange! I feel that I have not put a lot of effort, I have not practiced often! My negative thoughts have been with me for so many years, how it can change thus fast? Very strange!

Participant D was trying to explain the transformation with her conscious mind. The therapist explained to her that sometimes what we have experienced inside cannot be explained by our rational mind. But whatever happened in the unconscious mind was able to flow to the conscious mind for us to realize that change had occurred.

Participant D described her wish to achieve 100 percent freedom on time, money, the state of mind and her mood. She used television to represent the freedom. It can be switched on and switched off automatically. She wanted to do better. The only concern was the feeling of fear that was deep down within, the fear of the future and the fear of being hurt. She has carried the fear since young and it was unexplainable. The counselor actually would like to process with her during this session but participant D preferred to process it in the coming session.

4.1.4.5 Description of the Fifth Session

Session five was mainly focused on participant D's feeling of fear and she has no way out of it.

C: Okay, what have made you fear?

PD: Fear of my parents' death. I will lose myself.

C: How does this thought occur?

PD: It is a feeling. I know it is illogical. But it is a feeling. It is a part of me.

C: When does it start?

PD: When I saw my parents getting old. I fear they will die soon.

C: Has the fear emerged before?

PD: Yes, during my previous ten days meditation camp. I was feeling the fear until my whole body shaken.

The therapist also let participant D choose the feelings she wished to have through the feeling cards. She chose the sense of security and comfort.

C: What is the connection between security and fear?

PD: I need the sense of security to overcome fear. Since standard four, I was longing for security. If I have a boyfriend or soul mate, he must be able to give me sense of security. Sense of security will help me to overcome fear.

C: Who do you think can give you security?

PD: My father. But now I see him aged, I felt insecure and fear. But before this, I have no fear, though I can feel a little insecure even with my father around.

The therapist decided to use parts dissociation therapy to help participant D to integrate her inner ego state. Participant D was asked to open her palms and place them on her laps. The ego state of fear was taken out to place on her left palm.

C: You can now discuss with the fear whether he can help you to find the sense of security.

PD: He said he is able to provide me sense of security, but I do not believe in him.

The therapist then suggested to participant D to search for the ego state of security inside her. When she has found the ego state of security, it was taken out to her right palm.

C: Just look at the security, how the texture and the color changes, until you can feel the sense of security, tranquil and comfort in your heart.

PD: (Nodded her head)

C: You can now place your right palm onto your left palm. Let the fear surrender under security.

When participant D put her palms together, she saw an image of a white swan. The swan was swimming freely on the water in a lake. Participant D felt secure, comfortable and tranquil when she observed the image that was emerging. She realized this was another resource that could help her and it was within her.

4.1.4.6 Description of the Sixth Session

Participant D revealed an event that had happened between herself and her mother a few days ago. She has thrown out her anger at her mother. In the midst of the process, she could feel the center of herself; the weight at the core of her being was stable and peaceful within. She was confused again how come the head and the heart were not congruent. The therapist then explained to her that, since session four, her inner self has started to transform. She has obtained a certain level of stability within her. This was when the spiritual self began its root of stability. However, the human self was not yet in tune with the spiritual self. When the negative emotion was triggered, it would be manifested into action.

C: When you practice more on meditation or contemplation, you will readjust the head and the heart until they synchronize with each other. Congruence took place when the mind, body and spirit are in tune.

PD: Ya la. Luckily I went to Singapore after that. I was able to cool myself. I discovered actually I am able to forgive my mum. Maybe previously I am not able to forgive her. But she has also stepped back. I was wrong too. The stability in my heart was helping me to get through my emotion!

Coming back to the figurines she had arranged on the table. Participant D felt she wanted to go to her place of incubation to feel the universal energy (as shown in Figure 4.9).

PD: I wish to feel the nature, the pure energy of the universe, purify myself, casting out the distorted thoughts and prejudices.

C: How do you define pure?



Figure 4.9. Participant D's place of incubation: Back to nature.

PD: Crystal clear, genuine, not imaginative, the real one. Then I will choose a sheep to cling, feeling warmth and secure. I need fresh air, the chirping sound of the birds and the waterfall.

C: What is significant in your figurines?

PD: Sense of security, I am waiting for “the being” to fill me with the sense of security.

C: What do you expect of this sense of security?

PD: Not ignoring, facing everything without fear, not afraid of anything either
God or Ghost, a clear mind, not to be influenced by fear.

C: What do you intend to do?

PD: Planning to join a ten days Vipasana retreat to calm me down.

Participant D has chosen the theme, “Back to nature” for the placement of the figurines. She realized that her center was the pavilion; even though it was small it was stable. She has chosen tame animals to surround her, plus the rock to defend her. All the figurines were put in the manner that symbolized she had more solid stability now. Looking at the animals reminded her to take off her mask to face her real self, it was her real self that has the ability and confidence; at times she needs to allow her instincts to take their place in her life.

4.1.4.7 Description of the Seventh Session

Participant D placed her confidence on the stability of the core of her being. She felt that with the stability, she would be able to get through difficult situations. Her direction in life would be clearer and she will be able to stand firm.

C: How are you going to maintain yourself?

PD: So far, I think I should practice meditation. But I need to be aware of my feelings. External indicator such as my appetite to take good food will also help me to evaluate my situation.

Participant D revealed that she has found a way to balance herself to stay peaceful in her home. She has chosen to be passive and alert to the words of her mother. Even though she was unable to change anything, she hopes to fulfill her obligation at home.

In the midst of undergoing a situation that was not in her favor, she was having the enthusiastic spirit to live a better life. She was hoping that one day she would be able to achieve the fulfillment she wishes in life.

When participant D looked at the expressive art she has created, she identified herself with the Figurine (as shown in Figure 4.10). She resonated with the figurine of

having a little sadness because of the hurt, but it was fine, she was still able to take a moment to calm down and after that able to stand up. She was using humor to overcome bitterness.

C: How do you connect with him?

PD: He is me! I hope I am like him, painful all over. But can take time out, to see clearly what has happened. After that do the things I like, using humor, not to take things serious, not to take myself too serious. At times, I am able to joke with myself.



Figure 4.10. Participant D's art work: My desired outlook of the world around me.

Participant D wanted to enjoy her life in a relaxing manner even though she has sadness in her. She was actually enjoying good food. She could use her appetite to measure whether she is in a positive mood or otherwise. In addition, she would like to

learn and to see clearly the world around her, and also to know herself better. Looking at things clearly may be a stepping-stone for her to move toward self-fulfillment.

PD: I have chosen to go for a ten days Vipasana retreat, the aim is to cleanse myself. I need to put things in order, I need to see things clearly. This is a process. When I reduce the distorted thoughts, strengthening the stability within, I think I am able to translate things in a clear manner.

C: What will be your prospect for the future?

PD: Cleared my debts. Live a relaxed life. No burden. No worries for survival. Achieve a stable and tranquil state within.

Participant D has gained self-knowledge to a certain extent. In the process of exploring the stability in her core, she has found the solution to settle her problems. She aims to achieve a higher state of stability in order to move toward her goal in life. She has given a theme for her artwork: My desired outlook of the world around me.

4.1.4.8 Summary of the Case Report of Participant D

Participant D has been finding ways to ease her negative sensation toward her mother. Apart from ignoring, she has been occupying herself with watching interesting television programs and reading self-enriching books as the ways to manage her depressive emotions; she was still seeking a solution for her problem to her expectation. Psychotherapy was one way that she thought could help her.

Participant D revealed that she was always looking forward to interesting events happening in order to adorn her life. This was one of the ways that could energize her. This was the nature she carried with her during the psychotherapy process. She was touched by the expressive arts therapy, especially when she was doing the life size portrait. She was able to use an interesting way to look at her negativities. In the midst

of looking at her negativities, she found herself surrounded by many resources and gained insights while looking at her negative emotions. This was the turning point for her to look at her fear, which was very deep down within her. She also realized the way her mother treated her has caused her to be mentally restricted with many negative thoughts. As she progressed with the psychotherapy sessions, she began to shift her paradigm and she was able to free her negative thoughts on certain matters.

As she continued to deal with the fear, she was finally able to ease it with her resources. Upon soothing her negative emotions, she was rewarded with a stable and firm sensation inside her. She was puzzled as well as amazed with the firm sensation within her. Nevertheless, she could still feel the fear inside her and she would want to sustain the stable and firm sensation by practicing meditation. When participant D was doing her self-depiction, she revealed that she was proud of herself because she has achieved an unexpected outcome in a short time. Participant D intends to go for a ten-day Vipasana retreat in the near future. She hopes to cleanse herself so that she could see and translate things in a clear manner. Later, she revealed that she wished to develop her expertise in discovering talent and inspiring potential when she depicted herself as the hot-air balloon (as shown in 4.3.5.4).

4.1.5 Participant E

Participant E was a 39-year-old Chinese single lady. With her certificate of professional accounting, she is working as an accounting analyst in one of the accounting firms in Kuala Lumpur. Participant E came from Tawau, Sabah. She is the eldest amongst three siblings; she has two brothers, one working in Japan and her youngest brother is working in Kuala Lumpur. Her father was a government servant, a marine officer, now a retiree and her mother was a housewife. Her family stayed with her paternal

grandmother until Participant E was five years old. Participant E was very much loved by her grandmother because she was the eldest grandchild in the family. Her family left their grandmother when they shifted to their new house.

Participant E did not have a good relationship with her parents. Her father was very dominant and controlling. Her mother was very passive and she was not fond of expressing herself. It was very difficult for participant E to communicate with her parents whenever she had an issue to talk about. Although participant E could not communicate well with her parents, she has an aunt who was compassionate to journey with her until she finished her secondary education in Tawau.

Participant E has a positive social life; she keeps herself occupied with “self betterment” courses. She has been attending art classes on Mondays, after office hours, but she has stopped after encountering a busy schedule in her life. She was also a volunteer worker in visiting patients in Assunta Hospital.

She came for counseling mainly to ease her fear. Participant E would like to be happier with who she is. She was hoping that the therapist will do something appropriate to enhance her “self” and to help her develop a better personality so that she could stand up and be confident of herself in pursuing her life goals.

4.1.5.1 Description of the First Session

Participant E was aware of the fear within her. She has realized this was the feeling that was holding her from moving forward in life. She would like to work on her fear in session one.

The therapist then applied parts dissociation therapy to ease her fear as well as to generate the resource that could tie down her fear. During the therapy, participant E communicated with the problem part and the resource part. Participant E described the

process of therapy as being similar to a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. She realized the problem part (fear) and the resource part (love) can come together to form a greater life force. They can be matched and merged together.

(*Note:* C: Therapist, PE: Participant E).

PE: What gives me problem is always the fear in my heart. I always have the second thought that what if nobody is there for me. So, these things come together. With fear, I can do nothing. With fear and love, I think I can do better things.

C: The fear is contra, but the fear and love merge together, it becomes the strength within you.

PE: Ya, fear is subset of the love, so it should go forward.

C: What is the difference before and after?

PE: More energy.

C: Are you going to stand firm for your decision?

PE: I want to do it. I don't know how firm I am. I have not tested it out. So I don't know.

C: Let's say the scale is 100 percent. How would you rate yourself for that wantness to do it?

PE: 80 percent.

Participant E was starting to have the zeal to make changes for her self-betterment. She may need time to design a plan that may work out for her. Meanwhile, she has started figuring out what needs to be changed according to her priority. She probably needs more time to put things together and put things into action.

4.1.5.2 Description of the Second Session

Participant E has placed psychotherapeutic priority on her self-knowledge. She would like to know herself more. She has shown some improvement in her courage to voice out for herself. Though she has shown some assertiveness, she felt that she has the potential for improvement. She was still the quiet one among her friends. Participant E revealed that the fear within was probably related to her self-esteem.

PE: I guess it is related to my self-esteem. I always thought that people might not listen to me. What I have said, people might not receive me or perceive me well.

C: That is the fear you have?

PE: Yes.

As participant E agreed to work on her fear, the control room of the mind, a hypnotherapy technique was utilized to help the participant to take control over her fear. According to participant E, it took her a while to find the switch for her fear.

C: Have you done the adjustment?

PE: Actually not much. I saw it as a process of different stage. It is like on-going. When it is time to decide to do it, I should do it. I believe that it is good to let go some of the fear.

C: Did you do that during trance?

PE: I did not remove it, I am just playing around with it.

C: How is the feeling of just play around with the switch?

PE: I have a control. I should let go. The top part is like the gearbox in a car, it is 5-4-3-2-1, so I just pull down until 1.

C: How do you feel about that pulling?

PE: Good. I have to let go, that's what I want.

C: Do you think you are able to let go?

PE: I think I have the confidence.

C: How do you feel now?

PE: Very relaxed. I felt the kind like certainty. That's what I want. I want to let go. I am still in my mind to plan how I want it to be done!

Participant E has shown her confidence to take control over her problem, the fear of being rejected. Although she still allowed the fear to stay where it should be, she thought she was able to take charge and cope with it.

4.1.5.3 Description of the Third Session

Participant E revealed that she has been working consistently on her inner self for the past ten years. Nevertheless, there were certain parts she still kept in their own presence. She was wondering why she had kept them and not transformed them. It was the negative thought that enhanced her fear of rejection. She was hesitating whether to change her job and whether she should open herself to an intimate relationship. She has the feeling of fear regarding both events.

The therapist then decided to use The Healing Garden Script² technique to help participant E tailor her negative thoughts. After the induction and deepener for trance, the therapist suggested that she walks through the garden. Participant E revealed that it looked like a Japanese Garden. The therapist subsequently strengthened participant E with suggestions of encouragement, courage and change.

Upon waking up, participant E revealed that she needed more time to plant the flowers. She wanted more space for the flowers.

² The Healing Garden Script is a hypnotherapy technique that uses metaphor of a garden to heal the negativity in the unconscious mind (Allen, 2004, p. 139).

PE: Yes, I think I want something more, some more flowers.

C: Are you longing for something?

PE: I think I am.

C: What is that something?

PE: A change. I don't know whether it is work or relationship. It's a change. I don't know exactly what? A change of job, may be a new profession, or at the same time I can do what I am happy with, may be a relationship.

Participant E was aware she was still standing within her comfort zone.

Although she desires a change in her job and her relationship with friends, she has yet to step out of her comfort zone. She was actually still feeling the fear of rejection. She was struggling with whether or not to take the risk.

PE: Actually I felt excited what was inside. I don't know why I keep thinking of the beach, looking at the sunrise. Am I going to observe or am I going to make things happen! A bit of anxious, a bit of interest.

C: That's your vision?

PE: Ya.

Participant E needed more time and space to explore the opportunity that was secured so that she could get ready to make a change.

4.1.5.4 Description of the Fourth Session

In the fourth session, there was a shift in participant E's perception. It was obvious during this session that she has found her direction in life, so to speak. Though she is probably not clear what to do yet, she has decided to courageously step out of her comfort zone.

The sand tray technique was used as a tool for enhancing the psychotherapeutic process. Participant E revealed she was heading to the place where she would like to be herself (as shown in Figure 4.11 and Figure 4.12).

PE: The place is where my heart is. To be happy is to be myself. To be grounded is to do something that I like. I am not sure.

C: You have not found the answer?

PE: To be specific, I wouldn't know. To be grounded, for me I always thought that I am a simple person. May be there are things that I am good at. I like to be my own self.

Participant E has chosen the tree to signify herself, as she wants to be grounded.

PE: When I choose the trees, is always coming back to be deeply rooted in life. Deeply rooted means what I believe is what I am doing. What I am doing is what I believe. That's why the root is going deep down underneath and the trees are going up. It might bear fruits and flowers. And I feel good about it.

C: Is that any connection to your life currently?

PE: I saw new branches coming out. The tree trunk is getting bigger. I saw flowers but no fruits yet.

C: What do the flowers mean to you?

PE: Something I believe, it gives insight and I become a better person.

Participant E felt that she was more stable now, not easily shaken up compared with who she was.

PE: I am growing a bit older and wiser compare to the last round. I am moving forward from a hillside down to a flat land. I am quite happy, actually I am no longer sitting under the tree which I did some years ago. I am moving downwards, I am moving forward. I am happy. A bit of resistance, a bit worry

whether it will be successful. I don't think that will stop me and I want to move forward. There are friends who are supporting me.

C: If you want to move the figurine of yourself, where would you like to move?

PE: Moving forward to the dream (participant E moved the figurine toward the house). It is still be myself, where my heart is. The house is the place where my soul can rest.

C: What is the bird on the top of the roof?

PE: The bird can see things from far because of its nature. When something stands in a higher place, it can see things from far, can see things that we could not see. As a kind of proactive, for me is a kind of wisdom. Bird can be signifies as someone that can be trusted, someone whom we can rely. As I am processing, the divine came into my mind. I always feel peaceful when birds are around chirping, this is a kind of calmness, comfortable and happy.

C: Can you talk about the landscape in the tray?

PE: Putting high up, that is certain part in my journey. I am in my own comfort zone. So from the place where I use to be, I am walking down to the ground. The space is wider. Can be more space after one another. A lot of freedom rather than staying. I still prefer to see things from the top. But it is still good to be with people instead of staying in my comfort zone.

C: What is the theme you would like to give to your tray?

PE: Welcome home.

The theme of "Welcome Home" was given to the sand tray she designed. This was the turning point that she was seeking for her soul to become a better her.



Figure 4.11. Participant E's sand tray: Moving from a hillside to a flat land.



Figure 4.12. Participant E's sand tray: Welcome home.

4.1.5.5 Description of the Fifth Session

The life size portrait of participant E revealed her desire to change her job. She was looking for a job that could give her life, a job that dealt with people. By listening to her heart, she managed to determine what her heart wanted. It was also building her faith in her spiritual self, to nurture her soul.

When participant E was looking at her portrait, she realized the color in the portrait was telling her it was time to make changes (as shown in Figure 4.13).

PE: I did not think of anything when I drew. Perhaps the change will come from the head. There isn't only integration yet. The small sun I drew is very colorful, perhaps it is my body telling me it is time to change.

C: What about now?

PE: I feel that I am ready to try. I am 60 percent ready.

According to participant E, she was tired of her account analyst job; it was not lively. She intended to quit her current job, find another accounting job in which the pay was good enough for her to further her counseling course.

She drew many curving circles in the life size portrait; she signified the small circle as her energy and the big circle as her life force.

PE: Originally they should be one. This is my concept. They are very near to each other, not yet integrate. They are still separated because I think I still have the fear within my heart. Fear of failure.

C: When you talk about it, how do you feel now?

PE: It is inside one of my room. Secured. It is not big enough to haunt me down.

C: How much you rate for the difficulty to integrate your energy?

PE: Four to five out of ten.

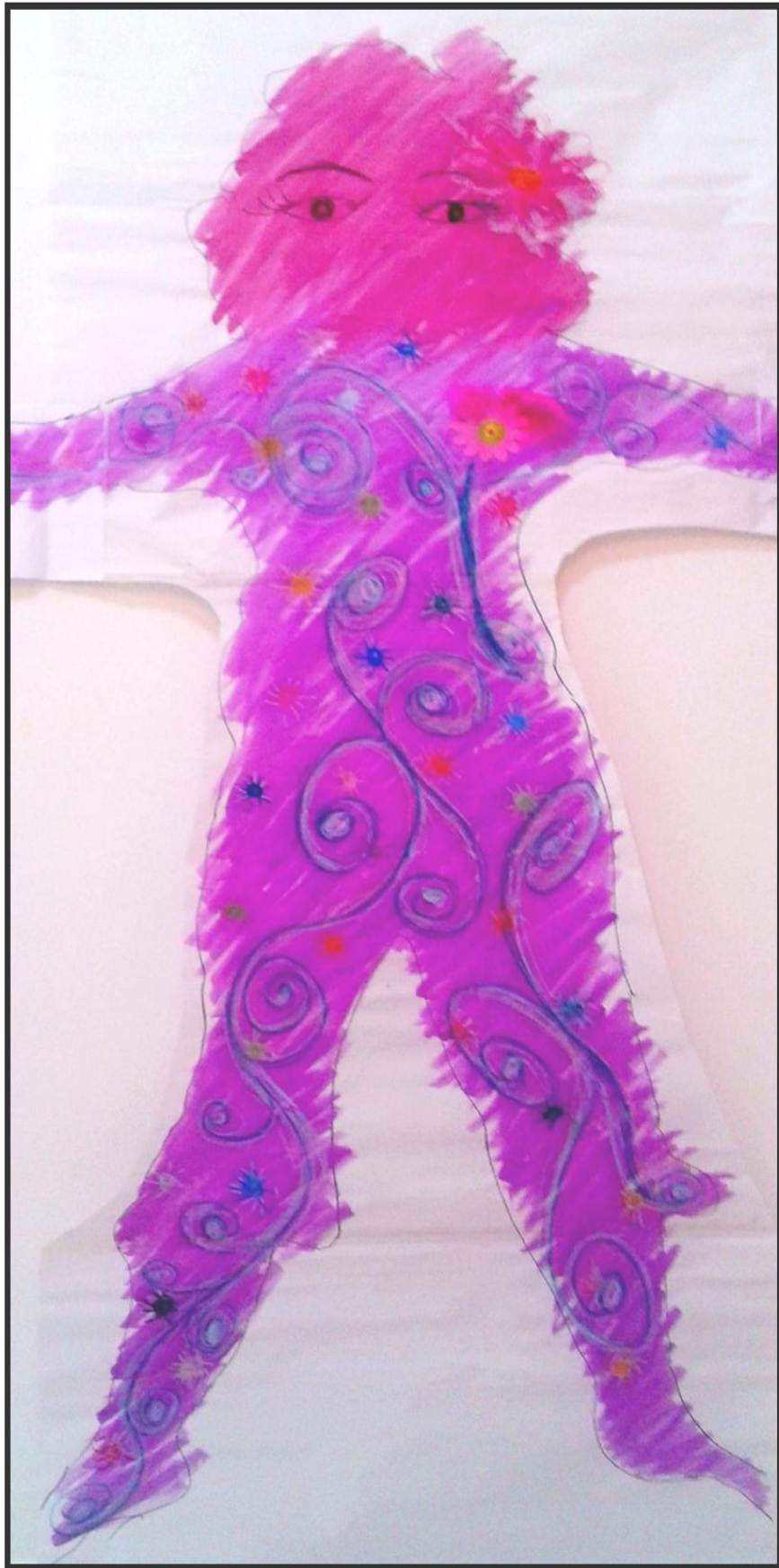


Figure 4.13. Participant E's life size portrait: The life force.

Parts therapy was utilized with the aim of integrating the participant's energy and to ease her fear with the integrated energy. During the psychotherapeutic process, participant E felt tranquil when the integrated energy was surrounding her fear of failure.

C: How do you feel throughout the process?

PE: Very relaxing. The energy and the life force said now, ok you are connected. So you are becoming one. My heart feels it is beginning to connect. Relax.

C: Is that any image that is emerging?

PE: Ya, an image of a type of plant that is waiting for the flower to blossom, it seems wanting to burst. I feel it is telling me "Be prepared for the burst, taking up the risk."

C: What do you think the message conveys?

PE: I feel a little fear. But on the other hand I am also excited. What's coming? What's next? What's new? All the while you have been talking what gives you life, take up the challenge, take up the risk, just go for it!

This was a strong message for her to take a step forward to make changes in her life. The message actually gave participant E the strength and courage to take up the challenge. Although she did not know whether the plan of changing would work for her, she has deliberately decided to go for the betterment of her soul!

4.1.5.6 Description of the Sixth Session

In this session, participant E was asked to write down her timeline events that were significant to her from age zero to age 39. Although participant E has been processing the traumatic events for quite a number of years, it seemed the traumatic events were still bothering her. The therapist would like to help her dissolve the traumatic events by using the technique of EMDR (eye movement dissociation and reprocessing).

Participant E has determined several issues such as her relationship with her father, the inferior feeling during her initial stage of menstruation, fear of failure, awful feeling toward her boss and the betrayal of her ex-boyfriend.

The EMDR technique was applied to desensitize the traumatic images in her mind, her negative thoughts and the body sensation that manifested during therapy. A positive reframing statement was used for each issue so that the mind was able to integrate positive elements when reprocessing the issue.

Participant E said she felt lighter and relieved after each round of reprocessing upon the issue. Her shoulder was the part that was very sensitive; a sore and painful sensation had emerged during therapy. The sensation was gone after the healing took place. In the latest issue with her boyfriend, she has decided to cut off her contact with him completely.

PE: When you were doing the therapy, my mind suddenly said, “No more contact with Brian”.

C: What does that mean to you?

PE: No more relationship with this man. I have been struggling for the past eight months. I am letting go of any expectations; I don’t want to see him anymore.

C: When you have made your decision, how do you feel?

PE: Relief.

Participant E has obtained the strength to move on with her life without looking back at any past trauma. The healing white light technique was used to boost her decision to move on with her life.

PE: I felt the white light beaming on my left shoulder.

C: What is that?

PE: Probably it is God. No body sensation but I feel comfortable in my heart.

Comfort because I feel I am dwelling with myself. Also, the light on top of my head, feeling secure, to be with myself is comfortable. I also see a purple circle.

C: What is that purple circle to you?

PE: My definition is wisdom. I want to say, “dwell with it”.

C: Dwell with it?

PE: It came out just now.

C: What do you mean by dwell with it?

PE: Wisdom. Part of wisdom comes from my intuition. Now my mind is telling me to follow it.

It was obvious that participant E was being strengthened emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. She has gained the insight of believing her intuition, which she can incorporate with the wisdom, and to use it when dealing with life challenges.

4.1.5.7 Description of the Seventh Session

In the seventh session, time line therapy and the resource ratchet techniques were applied to positively pseudo-orientate participant E for her future endeavor. She was asked to choose a desired event for the future to replace the event that was diminished from her sight during therapy. For participant E, buying a house was the event that filled in the gap on the time line.

PE: When you ask me to replace the gap, suddenly I see a train moving in front of me and then a double decker bus. There is the word “welcome”.

C: What is the message for you?

PE: Moving forward, welcome to the change.

C: How do you feel?

PE: Work hard for it. When I am on the boat to move forward, I won't look back at all.

Participant E felt that her life ought to keep moving forward to the future without looking backward. The scenario of her active imagination for the future has enhanced her confidence to make changes in her life.

In the second part of this session, the resource ratchet technique was actually boosting the participant's inner resources so that she will be confident with herself to achieve her goals in life. During therapy, the resources in the participant's mind were her smiling face, easygoing manner, her sincerity and her networking with friends.

PE: When I walk on my time line, I see myself becoming bigger. When I am at the peak, my left hand is shaking. When I press on the anchor point, I actively imagine I am in the state of making money through my networking and friends.

C: How do you feel now?

PE: Feeling good, with every step I take, I am becoming bigger. I am smiling and happy.

C: Is that anything you feel increasing?

PE: I know well my resources; I ought to be brave enough to use them.

C: That's what you think?

PE: Don't keep it, do it!

Participant E was aware she will go through a transition period while she worked toward her goals in life. She intended to reschedule her time for her social welfare work. She would like to seek a job that will enrich her soul, study counseling courses as well as buying herself a comfortable home. In the meantime, she has decided to take care of herself and get herself ready for the changes.

4.1.5.8 Summary of the Case Report of Participant E

Participant E was aware of the feeling of fear within that was bothering her, the fear of leaving her working environment and also the fear of having an intimate relationship. She wanted to change but at the same time she was still standing within her comfort zone. As she was stepping out of her comfort zone, she wanted herself to be grounded. She could recognize the bird as the divine who granted her wisdom, calmness, comfort and happiness.

In short, Participant E was in the process of finding what she wanted in life. While searching for her soul, she was also encountering her past hurts. She was very patient with herself, allowing herself to take time to work on her problems. She has shown some inner development since the fourth session. She revealed that she was growing older and wiser. Participant E has experienced a significant transformation as she felt the integration of her inner energy and the universal life force took place in the fifth session. She then began to have the courage to make changes in her life.

It was later in the sixth session where she was relieved from the baggage she had been carrying since she was young, and it was dissolved. Some of the questions she had for a long time were finally being answered. The beautiful elements within her came together and she has decided to believe in her intuition as part of her wisdom. She was giving herself time and space to plan for her future. She has decided on some changes that ought to take place within the next five years. She wanted a job that could enrich her soul, and she planned to improve her networking with friends, study counseling courses as well as buying a house. She wanted a life that could fulfill her soul. She has decided to pursue psychotherapy courses as her priority for self-betterment.

4.1.6 Participant F

Participant F was a Chinese widow aged forty-two. She was married with one daughter who is sitting for her UPSR at the time of interview. Participant F was working as a florist in one of the shops in Ampang, Kuala Lumpur. The participant's father was staying with her, so that he could look after the daughter.

Participant F was abandoned by her mother at the age of three. Since her mother left her, she has been staying with her father and an elder sister until she finished her studies in a secondary school in Bahau. She went to England to work after her SPM examination. She met her husband in England. During this time, participant F managed to get herself a certificate in flower arranging. After many years of courtship, participant F and her husband finally got married. They were a loving couple in the eyes of their friends. They shared a similar interest of travelling around the world. They would plan their schedule to travel during the holidays. Participant F delivered her baby girl in Malaysia. They went back to England when the baby was two years old. However, participant F decided to return to Malaysia after three years with her daughter on the arrangement that her husband would visit twice a year.

Participant F and her husband were apart for two years when her husband remarried a Shanghai Chinese lady in England. Participant F was shocked when she found out her husband remarried. She was suffering from the impact of an unfaithful marriage from her spouse. Two years after his remarriage, her husband was diagnosed with nasal cancer. Her husband was battling with his illness for fifteen months before passing away in England when Participant F was 39 years old.

Since her husband's betrayal, participant F has been emotional, unstable and psychologically traumatized. She wanted an explanation from her husband for the reason of his betrayal. When her husband could not fulfill her wish, she would throw

tantrums, telephone her husband, send short messages and e-mail to pester her husband. She once fought with her husband in the airport when she found out that he brought his Shanghai wife to Malaysia. Participant F was overwhelmed with hurt and defeated emotions.

When her husband was sick in England, she would still pester him for the explanation. She wanted her husband to write a letter to explain to her the subsequent development of her husband's relationship with the Shanghai wife. Until the last week of her husband's life, she managed to catch hold of her husband's photo, looking at his lean and tired face. She then realized that her husband was dying. At the last few hours before her husband died, participant F was able to control herself when talking to her husband. She managed to tell her husband that she forgave him, and asked her husband to persevere so that he could come back to Kuala Lumpur for Chinese New Year. However, her husband died after talking to her.

Participant F met with the Shanghai lady during her husband's funeral. She also met with her husbands' friends. They seemed well acquainted with the Shanghai lady. Participant F felt betrayed and disturbed. She felt defeated by the Shanghai lady. She was overwhelmed by the atmosphere around her. She could not sleep the whole night, but decided to talk to the Shanghai lady early the next morning before she left Kuala Lumpur. Participant F managed to see the Shanghai lady in her hotel room and had some of her questions answered. Participant F gave the Shanghai lady a hug, a very difficult hug that signified reconciliation before saying goodbye.

It took participant F almost three years to grieve over the whole traumatic event. When she sobbed out the story of her husband's death and betrayal, she felt she was still looking for an answer about her husband's relationship with the Shanghai lady. She could feel the heaviness in her heart. She was lonely especially at night, when

everything was so quiet; she was always ruminating and cried herself to sleep, or she would play video games until she was so tired that she fell asleep on the sofa.

When participant F came to see the therapist, her main goal of psychotherapy was to be liberated from this traumatic event that has haunted her for almost three years. Participant F was ready to deal with her psychological and emotional baggage, the baggage that involved herself, her husband and the Shanghai lady.

4.1.6.1 Description of the First Session

Due to the participant's stage of grief, treatment started with letter writing, this was to help the participant grieve through the unfinished issues with her late husband and it served as a debriefing for the participant.

The participant was given the following format for writing a letter to her husband:

- i. Something I appreciate about you
- ii. I apologize for
- iii. I forgive you for
- iv. I want you to know
- v. I regret that I
- vi. Saying goodbye to her late husband

The tool of letter writing was to help participant F frame and identify what she may be feeling. It was hoped that by going through the process of bereavement with letter writing, participant F would be able to cope with life and loss.

Immediately after participant F wrote the letter, she cried out wholeheartedly, telling the therapist that she really wanted to say goodbye to her husband and move on with her life. The letter writing indeed was helping her to realize that she was standing

in between a door, right there and then, she was going to step out of that door and leave the past behind. She abruptly found a path for her to move forward. Nevertheless, she did not know how long it would take for her to completely leave everything that hurt.

(Note: C: Therapist, PF: Participant F).

C: What did you experience?

PF: When I wrote the letter, I just look at myself, I know I longed for love. I knew that I do not want to let go of the past. But I realized saying goodbye to him works for me. I really need to say goodbye now.

C: You have decided to get over it?

PF: Suddenly, I realized that I was living in the past. I have not drawn a timeline for it, before and after; because I do not know there is a door here. I have not walked past the door. Now, I am standing in front of the door, going to take one step in front to pass through the door. Amazingly, I have found a path to walk ahead. Before that I have not found the door, but now I have found the door, but I do not know how long it will take to completely walk through the door. Anyway, I have found the door.

The psychotherapeutic process continued with the healing white light protocol. This was to sooth her inner heart and hopefully to relieve her hurt.

After the therapy in the trance, participant F felt the heaviness in her heart being emptied a little; she felt lightness and peace in her heart. Participant F felt that she needed more time to recover completely.

4.1.6.2 Description of the Second Session

The wheel of influence, a Satir therapy technique, was used to determine participant F's resources. The participant shared about her mother; she swore she will not follow her mother's footsteps by abandoning the family.

PF: I will not leave my child, I do not have mum beside me, I will not let this happen to my child.

C: You have experienced it, what do you think of your change?

PF: It is a caution for me. It serves as a lesson to me.

The resources spotted here were alertness and awareness, and also not selfish to bear the responsibility in the family. The experience without a mother in the family helps participant F emphasize on self-processing before making any decisions.

When she shared about her years in secondary school, she agreed she has several resources that make her proud of herself. The resources were self-confidence, independence and the courage to stand for justice.

PF: I feel that I am in the right, I must stand for it.

C: You are bold when you feel justified.

PF: Ya. My friends think that I am brave and independent, especially when they knew the incident about my husband. That's my image in their eyes.

In the midst of affirming her own resources, she revealed that she was lonely and empty within after her husband's death. She was filling the emptiness with activities such as travelling.

Participant F deliberately shared how her husband has changed her. They supported each other well enough to survive until he betrayed her to remarry the Shanghai lady. Participant F never regretted her decision to stay in Malaysia for her daughter's sake. She blamed her husband for being unfaithful due to his irresponsible

attitude. She subsequently said she has no regret over what she has done to her husband (fighting with him) because she did not know her husband was very sick. However, she told her husband that she had forgiven him before he died.

Since participant F still missed her husband very much and felt empty within, the therapist decided to use hypnotherapy to ease her hurt. Participant F was induced as usual to relax herself. She was asked to open her heart to the healing power of the white light.

PF: I did not feel anything at the beginning. Until you said, “the Father...my child...” I am touched, feel like crying.

C: How does your heart feel?

PF: Believe He is able to help me. My heart feel surrender to God.

Participant F may need more time to get over the incident of her husband’s death. Anyway, the determination of her resources was something positive that served as a way to help raise her spirit and mood.

4.1.6.3 Description of the Third Session

Participant F was revealing that she was relieved from the impact of her husband. Her feeling on the whole situation has changed.

PF: When I think of my husband recently, my feeling has changed. I felt that his death is over. When I cry now, it is self pity. There are two different things.

C: You have got over it.

PF: I am happy I am liberated from his shadow. It is easier to make decision now because only I to decide.

C: Have you gained back your energy?

PF: I am more relaxed. No more struggling in my heart.

When participant F was sharing about her family of origin, she revealed that all her siblings were not close to each other. Most of them were selfish. Among the eight siblings, three of them are widows. One brother has divorced and her elder sister has been diagnosed with cancer. She felt this was not an ideal family for her.

C: Any thoughts about how your family should be?

PF: Husband and wife need to trust each other. Be open and frank with each other.

C: Is that anything from your family that can be brought into your family?

PF: All of my siblings are willing to take care of my father, can consider filial piety.

C: How would you like your family be?

PF: No secret. Frank. I hope that my daughter will tell me everything, either bad or good.

C: What is your expectation towards your relationship with your daughter?

PF: Friends. She is a friend whom I need to guide, a bosom friend.

Participant F revealed that sometimes she does scold her daughter for her laziness, but she will talk to her after that. She will always remind herself to do the right thing in her family. Whatever positive input she has learned from other families, she will try to put into her family. Furthermore, she mentioned about the importance of health in the family. She has a smoking habit, which increased after her husband's death; she always smokes at night. She knows her daughter does not like her smoking.

PF: I know I will quit smoking one day, I have the determination.

C: When do you want to set your goal?

PF: I think about it. Ok. I set it now, next year, the date of today.

C: Write it down, 27th of February.

PF: Next year, the date of today. I will not smoke anymore.

Participant F was aware of the importance of a healthy body. But she was reluctant to stop smoking right away probably due to her “use to be” life style. As a result she has chosen a year to prepare herself to stop smoking.

4.1.6.4 Description of the Fourth Session

Participant F was expressing her emotions in the present. The emotions that were involved were gratitude, liberation, angry, nervous, regret and hesitation.

She was grateful to the higher power and the church to extricate herself from a critical situation after her husband died. She has let go of the incident and she feels comfort and gratefulness. She once believed her situation could not be solved but she has experienced the great extrication. She is totally free from the impact of losing her husband.

PF: I feel the most important help come from people who are willing to help. It is like you are doing therapy. Also I was heartily pouring out the whole story. I sincerely ask God to help. God knows. The outcome was very good.

C: What insights have you gained?

PF: Praying.

Meanwhile, participant F shared about her feeling of anger; she was actually angry at her daughter. Her daughter was going to sit for her UPSR exam, but she was not interested in studying. She was attracted to cartoon figurines. The participant was unable to prevent her daughter from playing with her cartoon figurines. She could not accept her daughter’s behavior. The therapist suggested to her to spend some time exploring and trying to understand her daughter.

PF: Try to blend with what she liked, at least what she said, I understand.

Probably there are some figures in the cartoon I can use to encourage her. She can remember every single figure of the cartoons.

C: What does this represent?

PF: Interest.

C: What is your decision now?

PF: Talk to her, can't force her, I need to understand.

When participant F revealed her other emotions (nervousness, feeling sorry and hesitation) she discovered that they were due to her current boyfriends. One boyfriend from Singapore would like to renew their relationship. The other boyfriend she thinks she might want to let go of because she sensed that he is perhaps a married man.

C: What do you want?

PF: I longed for an ideal home.

C: Are they fulfilling what you want?

PF: My present boyfriend. If I were to prove, he probably has a family. Better I don't find out, chase him away.

Since participant F was healed from the hurt of her husband's betrayal, she sensed that she was sinning having an affair with a married man. Through her daily prayer, she hoped to gain the courage to end the relationship.

C: How is your present situation?

PF: When I pray, I gained the strength, I can leave them. But after a while, the strength subsided. At times, I will tell him, "Are you the devil that come and test me. You are devil." Not enough strength, perhaps need to continue praying to gain more strength.

Regarding this matter, participant F has made her decision to wait until she was courageous enough to let go of the unhealthy relationship. She also realized if she can

get over her husband's impact on her, she should be able to dissolve the unhealthy relationship with this man.

4.1.6.5 Description of the Fifth Session

At the beginning of the session, Participant F revealed that her psychological and emotional baggage with her late husband was resolved.

Looking at the globe (as shown in Figure 4.14), participant F began to share about her travelling experiences. She revealed that from the twelve signs of the zodiac, she is a Leo. She has the trait of a leader. She was always the tour leader. But she was very hot tempered; sometimes when she was angry she would hurt the people around her. She usually counts from one to 10 to sooth her anger, but more often than not that technique did not help. As participant F has shown the tightness on her facial expression, the therapist decided to do anger management with parts dissociation therapy right away.



Figure 4.14. Participant F's arrangement of figurines.

Parts dissociation therapy was utilized to dissociate her anger and integrate her anger with the resources that could sooth her anger. The participant was able to find her two resources – courage and joy – that were able to overcome her anger. As the resources were expanding, the therapist suggested to participant F to cover her anger (left palm) with courage and joy (right palm).

C: What happens?

PF: Anger has to leave. Courage and joy are full. Right side strength is flowing to the left side.

C: What happen when it flows to the left side?

PF: Very stable and firm. Feel grounded, not hanging in the air.

The participant revealed that she felt stable and more grounded compared to before the therapy. The participant's anger was under control. The therapist will help her to look into her hatred toward China in the coming session.

4.1.6.6 Description of the Sixth Session

In the beginning of the session, participant F revealed that she felt her heart was relieved from her past hurt; she was fine. This session was the continuation from the fifth session. The therapist asked participant F to pick the two figurines from Mainland China, two warrior figurines from Xi An (as shown in Figure 4.14). Looking at the figurines, she began to express her feeling of reluctance to visit Mainland China although she likes travelling very much. She brought up the topic of the Shanghai lady whom her husband married in England. She realized that this Shanghai lady caused her to feel hatred and prejudice toward China. Participant F also expressed she would despise the Chinese ladies who came from China to work in Kuala Lumpur. Every time she saw them, they would become the objects of her contempt.

In her conscious mind, participant F knew that her perceptions toward China and the Chinese ladies were unhealthy. She would like to deal with this obsessive behavior.

PF: Is it normal to set prejudice towards China?

C: What do you think? Frankly speaking, I personally don't.

PF: Actually, there are many people from other nationalities, also having affair with somebody's husband. But, I only observe the ladies from China. This is not right, my thinking is not right. My prejudice towards China is all because of that Shanghai lady! What shall I do?

C: It is up to you whether you want to keep the prejudice or to let go!

PF: Ah yes, how to let go?

The therapist then asked the patient to write a short journal on a piece of paper. The journal required her to write down her positive and negative perceptions toward China. This journal writing was to elicit the participant's unconscious notions, of which she may not be aware.

In the midst of the journal writing, participant F realized her fear and prejudice toward China were due to the thought that she has been threatened. The Shanghai lady was threatening her, threatening her family life. This has caused her to resist everything related to China.

C: You suddenly realized?

PF: Right, many times, I am afraid because I do not know the reason. When I know the reason, I am not afraid anymore. This is my feeling now.

C: How do you feel now?

PF: My heart is open, I am feeling lighter.

In the last part of her journal, she had decided to let go of the past; she would like to shift her paradigm to accept China in a new way. The participant revealed that when she understood her fear, the reason of her prejudice toward China, it would be easier for her to handle herself and cope with the environment.

4.1.6.7 Description of the Seventh Session

In this session, one of the Satir therapy techniques, parts party, was used to integrate the positive and negative parts of participant F into a balanced state. It was indeed helping the participant to feel more confident in using the available resources in her life.

Participant F was asked to list down her positive parts and her negative parts. The positive parts she wrote down were helpful, generous, open minded, friendly, sincere,

standing for justice, awareness, straightforwardness, perseverance and control. On the other side, she wrote her negative parts as laziness, passive, daydreaming, sarcastic, feeling defeated, lack of confidence and egoistic.

The therapist was helping participant F to understand that the negative parts were like two sides of a coin. There will be pro and contra in one's character. During the process, participant F was able to reframe her perception on the negative parts onto her resources.

PF: My husband told me I am like water, pour inside different glasses, my shape will change according to the glasses. Meaning when I mix with good company, I will become good, when I mix with bad company, I will become bad.

C: Your ability of adapting is strong.

PF: Yes, I have a strong ability to adapt.

When every negative part was reframed onto the resources, the therapist asked participant F to say aloud, "I admire (the resource) because (give a good reason to support the resource)", one resource after another subsequently.

After the participant had finished strengthening all her resources, the therapist went on by ego boosting the participant's resources one by one in trance. Once the participant was in trance, the therapist began to affirm how the participant could sustain and maintain her qualities and resources by connecting all these different parts, using them with equilibrium.

The participant was allowed to immerse and enjoy the integration for a while. When the participant had enough of the integration, she was awoken as usual with the wake up script.

PF: Just now when you were saying aloud the parts, I was automatically thanking God. By the end of therapy, when I immersed onto my resources, I felt

my whole being expands. Like I am perfect, no weakness, everything is good.

My confidence expands.

C: What is the expectation for the future?

PF: I am confident. I am boosted with energy.

The participant revealed that she felt very high, her confidence had increased and she was energized. The feeling of defeat and anger had dissolved. Although she felt very high and full of energy, she was aware that some of her weaknesses needed to be transformed.

4.1.6.8 Description of the Eighth Session

The tree of life was used to enhance participant F's self knowledge in this session. The participant was asked to draw her tree of life. At the same time she was also processing her life events. She revealed that she was lucky to combine her hobby and her work. Her value as a florist was to make people happy. She was bringing joy to her customers as well as to her friends as she was able to arrange the flowers that pleased them.

C: What is the value in your life?

PF: I do not know how to express it. I know there is value. There are happy and joy.

The participant's work not only fulfilled her interest but also brought her financial security. When looking at the tree trunk she has drawn, she started to realize her greater value in life was connected to her family.

PF: Suddenly it came to my mind, the tree trunk looks like my home. I want to provide good things to my daughter, a good family environment. This is my life value. This is my greatest life value.

Participant F was concerned about her being a single mother affecting the growing process of her daughter. She was working hard to fulfill her daughters' needs and she would stand firm in order to provide a good shelter to her daughter.

PF: The centre of my focus is my daughter. Whenever an incident happens, when I think of my daughter, I will stand very firmly. She is my moral support on everything, without her, the tree will fall.

Apart from her daughter, the other important figures in her life were her late husband and the higher power. She has begun to give God a place in her life. She found comfort and security within whenever she prays.

PF: Previously I was depending on my own strength to solve problems. Now, whenever I encounter something, I will pray to God. I will ask for His guidance. He is now having an important place in my life.

C: How do you feel about it?

PF: Like a person listening to me. I am not alone. Though I do not hear Him answering me, but it is alright, I feel comfortable.

Participant F also revealed how the generous spirit of her husband influenced her. She would like to share her husband's enthusiastic attitude to the people around, so that they could feel the joy too. She was able to love in her own way. She was embracing the love of helping, the love of consoling and the love of sharing.

C: Have you done anything yet?

PF: Many people have asked me to help them, I will try to fulfill their needs. Sometimes, I do it free of charge. When I have promised, I will make my effort to do it.

The participant felt she was able to stand firm because the tree trunk was big and strong. She felt she was living well, and that she will live even better; especially she will be better spiritually. She was closer to the higher power.

4.1.6.9 Description of the Ninth Session

A series of soothing music was played at the beginning of the psychotherapy session. This was to stimulate the participant's thoughts and make the unconscious conscious. The music was able to soothe her and she felt relaxed. She could hear people singing the hymn to The Blessed Virgin Mary and the image of Jesus emerged in the midst, she mentioned hearing the lyric "whenever you are, wherever you go, Jesus is here." This was the positive stimulation on her. However, as the music went on, the participant felt the feeling of fear; fear of losing her daughter.

PF: I had this thought before, if my daughter died before me, I will go mad. I cannot accept it. I am very scared of this incident. I don't want to think about it.

The therapist then asked the participant to externalize the fear inside her. She then drew a broken heart shape to represent the feeling of fear. She was aware that her time, her work, her daily routine could help to fill the "broken" heart, or she may divert the love for her daughter to something else.

C: Is that anything else that can fill it and let you feel satisfied?

PF: Prayer. I know it can. Depending on the Lord's strength, I know it can be done.

In the midst of elaborating the events in her life regarding her husband's death and her daughter, Participant F felt she must be able to overcome the fear. She should be able to handle herself.

C: What do you think you can do?

PF: Protection. Pray for her.

C: What does that signify by praying?

PF: (long pause). Love and protection are the same. Caring... transfer the fear to caring. Care for her.

As the participant shared about her daughter, she knew that she could care for her, but she was still feeling the fear.

C: In the process of listening to the music just now, what are the thoughts that could ease your fear?

PF: The feeling of peace, the breeze blows, the hymnal of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the image of Jesus, was very tranquil, very comfortable. That could help, and of course the faith.

The parts dissociation therapy was used to ease her fear.

C: How do you feel now?

PF: I press it (the fear) until a very tiny little one.

During the therapy, participant F realized the Blessed Virgin Mary lost her son Jesus very early in life, which must be very painful; therefore her pain was real whereas the participant's one was merely her worry. Comparatively, participant F was aware that she worries too much.

C: What is your decision now?

PF: Nothing. Mine is worrying too much.

C: It is good you are able to think through it.

The realization about the Blessed Virgin Mary and Jesus was one of the tools to help participant F to understand her situation better. By understanding her situation, she was able to acknowledge her situation and get through it.

4.1.6.10 Description of the Tenth Session

Participant F has been feeling emptiness in her heart since her husband's death. In this session, the therapist asked the participant to externalize her emptiness on a piece of white paper and asked her to fill the space of emptiness on the piece of paper. The

participant expressed the events with stickers, drawings and written depictions. The events consisted of her working life, her family get together, gatherings with friends, travelling, doing physical exercise and building an ideal home (as shown in Figure 4.15).

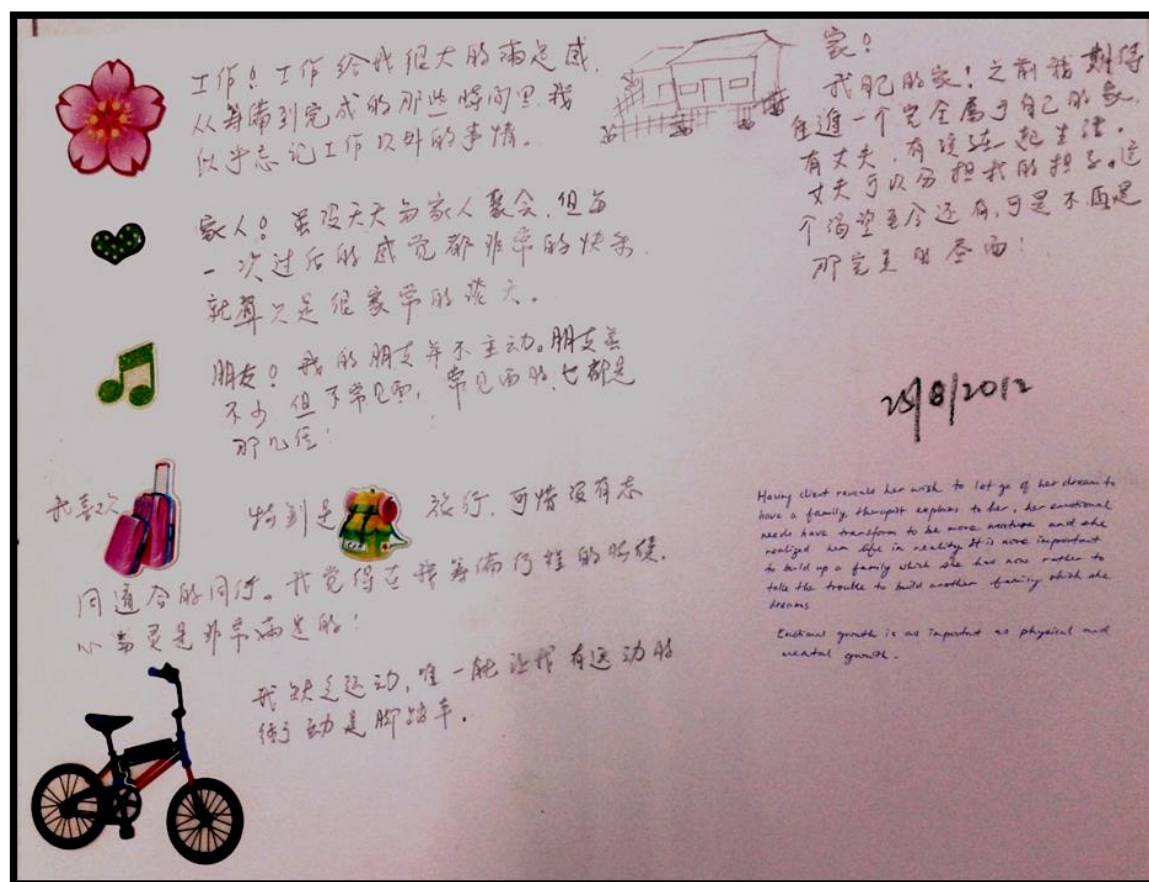


Figure 4.15. Participant F's depiction of her life.

As she was elaborating, she started processing her ideal home. She shared about her husband; actually she was waiting for her husband to come back and set up the ideal home, but her dream diminished when her husband died abroad. Hence, she was looking for a man to replace her husband. However, none of her boyfriends was the man she was expecting; they could not take the place of the man in the family. She felt upset; at the same time, she was processing the whole situation.

PF: I have received my boyfriend's sms last night, he was aiming to have baby with me. I suddenly felt fear when thinking about it. It was a strange feeling with confusion. Then I realized it is good enough to have a home with my daughter.

C: What is now?

PF: It concerns my daughter. Basically it is simple, me and my daughter. If I build another home, there will be more problems, I will face more problems. I need to readapt myself to new situation. I am tired, no more energy. So, may be because of that, no more desire to set up the ideal home.

C: What is your decision?

PF: The bubbles of an ideal home have diminished.

C: You have shared so much, how is your mood now?

PF: I am satisfied with my current situation! (pointing to the left side of the white paper). These are the healthy ones (pointing to the right side, the ideal home). This is not necessary anymore.

It seemed that participant F has cleared her emotional baggage; she has felt the freedom within. It was obvious her emotional maturity has developed. Participant F actually realized that she could cope better with a simple family in her current life. The realization could be the turning point for her to focus on reality rather than on an unrealistic dream.

4.1.6.11 Description of the Eleventh Session

During the eleventh session, participant F revealed to the therapist that she once had an affair with a man two and a half years ago. Although she suspected he was married and having a family in Penang she continued the unhealthy relationship. This happened

because of her desire to set up a family, and also from the encouragement of friends and family members. As she has resolved the sorrow of losing her husband, her mind is clear and she feels that it is fine without a man in the family. She feels that she is financially independent, and that she is able to support the family not only financially but also emotionally and spiritually. As a result, she has voiced out to the man, her boyfriend, her intention to break off the unhealthy relationship.

Before therapy, the participant felt she was lacking the determination to break off the relationship. She is hoping she can persist with her decision even when she feels bored. The therapist has decided to use ego state therapy incorporated with parts therapy to enhance the participant's determination to end the relationship. It will be a process of communication between the therapist and the ego state of the participant.

The participant has decided to use the ego state of her persistence to live well even without her husband as her "determination". Another ego state will be her relationship with this man whom she calls "boy friend".

First, the participant was induced as usual to relax herself and she was able to go into a trance. Communication began between the therapist and the "boy friend".

C: "boy friend", are you willing to let participant end this unhealthy relationship? "boy friend", please reply.

PF: Can.

C: Which part of participant is able to help her to persist in ending the unhealthy relationship?

PF: "determination".

Therapy was continued with the communication between "determination" and the therapist.

C: Right, "determination", are you willing to help participant to end her unhealthy relationship with her boy friend? Please reply.

PF: Can.

Parts therapy was used subsequently; the part of “boy friend” was called out and he was placed on the participant’s left palm, whereas the part of “determination” was then being called out and placed on participant’s right palm. The therapist then asked the participant to hold her palm together so that “determination” would integrate with “boy friend”.

C: When you hold your palm together, how is your right palm feeling?

PF: Very strong.

C: What about left palm?

PF: Feeling of emptiness.

C: “determination”, do you have anything to say?

PF: No.

C: “boy friend”, do you have anything to say?

PF: As you wish.

C: What does that mean by “as you wish”?

PF: Doesn’t matter.

C: Can you explain about what you have said, ‘as you wish’ and ‘doesn’t matter’.

PF: “determination” says must leave, asks him to leave, he says doesn’t matter.

Later, when the therapist asked the participant to feel whether “boy friend” was able to leave the relationship, the participant felt that “determination” did not have enough strength to help “boy friend” to end the relationship.

C: Right, “determination”, can you tell me which part that can help you to enhance your strength?

PF: The power of God.

The participant then allowed the part which was called “the power of God” to join “determination” on the right palm, helping to fuel the strength to end the unhealthy relationship.

C: “boy friend”, do you have anything to say?

PF: Must leave.

C: Enough strength to leave?

PF: Got the strength.

It was obvious through the power of God that participant F felt a stronger determination to end the unhealthy relationship. Nevertheless, during the psychotherapeutic process, when the participant heard the voice saying, “must leave”, at the same time she felt a little bit of unwillingness; yet, she realized that her inner self was hinting her to leave the relationship, she felt it was good to end the relationship.

C: How do you feel about the whole process?

PF: I felt I need to leave him. My inner voice has said it, and it is very good. If I do not want to leave him, my inner self will not say it, I feel it is good to leave him. Although a little bit of unwillingness, but I think it is good. My heart already said that.

C: You believe in what your heart says?

PF: I believe.

C: You have a good resource during therapy. When you feel you have not enough strength, what would you do?

PF: Prayer, praying to God.

The therapist then asked all the parts to go back to their respective location in the participant’s body. A simple ego strengthening was induced before the participant awoke from the trance. The participant has learned that the tool and technique to strengthen her wish to end the relationship was through her determination and the power

of God working together. She will continue using her resources whenever she needs them.

According to the participant, two weeks later she felt liberated after her boy friend agreed to end the unhealthy relationship. She has made peace with herself and she was relieved and happy to move on with her life.

4.1.6.12 Summary of the Case Report of Participant F

Participant F has been finding a solution for her past traumatic experience when she was deeply hurt by her husband. She was open to psychotherapy and she was willing to deal with her problems. Initially she was doubtful of the good outcome of therapy, but since session three she revealed that she feels freed from the impact of losing her husband. She has continued to deal with some other problems, such as the fear of losing her daughter, the hatred toward Mainland China and the intimate relationship with a married man.

As healing has taken place one after another, her eyes, her mind and her heart were opened to accept more changes in her life. She realized she has been gaining insights and healings from the psychotherapy sessions. She has found her resources to cope with life. She has found her occupation as a florist entertaining and consoling. Eventually when her mood changed, she became calm, tranquil and energized. Her locus of control has shifted inward. She began to admit the divine's providence and she was aware that the higher power could sustain her calmness and peace in life. She realized she is obliged to provide a good home for her daughter. She was on her way to find her vocation in life. She hoped to find it in Calcutta when she visits Mother Teresa's house in January 2013; as what she has written in her self-depiction, she described herself as a renewed ordinary lady.

4.1.7 Participant G

Participant G was a thirty-seven-year-old Chinese lady. She was single, staying with her father and a sister in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. She is an accountant with her own accounting company. She is also a yoga instructor. Her two elder sisters have married. Her mother passed away a few years ago. Since her mother's death, she has been carrying a sense of guilt toward her mother. She felt regret for not spending time with her mother when her mother was ill in the hospital.

At the age of twenty-four, the participant was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She made up her mind to go through chemotherapy and recovered from her sickness. However, the results of the treatment left her infertile which led her boyfriend to break up with her. Since then, she has been taking care of her health seriously, even changing her diet to vegetarian. During the year, she had her ear operated on because of tinnitus. Her ear was better for a while, but she experienced tinnitus again later. A few months later, she was told there was a growth in her ovary; she could not remove the growth because it had grown too deep inside the wall of her ovary. Her blood pressure was also slightly higher than the normal level.

Participant G has been focusing on improving her health; she was enthusiastic in practicing yoga and meditation. She has expressed to the therapist there were some moments where she feels the friction between materialism and spirituality.

The participant sought treatment because she would want to dissolve her guilt toward her mother and to confirm whether she has let go the intimate emotions regarding the relationship with her boyfriend. She would also like to look into her negative emotions toward her elder sister.

4.1.7.1 Description of the First Session

Participant G has mentioned the sense of guilt toward her mother since her mother died a few years ago. The guilt that she carried was actually affecting her mood. She was not happy.

The therapist started the treatment with letter writing. This was to help the participant go through the process of expressing her feelings toward her mother, and get over her unfinished issues.

Participant G was given the following format for writing a goodbye letter to her mother.

- i. Something I appreciate about you ...
- ii. I apologize for...
- iii. I forgive you for ...
- iv. I want you to know...
- v. I regret that I ...
- vi. Saying goodbye to her mother...

In the midst of writing the letter, the participant sobbed for a while. She felt relieved after the letter writing.

(*Note:* C: Therapist, PG: Participant G).

PG: It is a release for me.

C: Compared to before, how do you feel now?

PG: I am feeling tranquil at the moment.

The psychotherapy process continued with the healing white light protocol. The healing white light was used to soothe the participant's entire being. It was to regenerate the tranquil sensation to her entire body.

When the participant awoke from the trance, she felt as if she has gone through a deep meditation. She was very deep into her own meditation.

PG: (laughing). When I sit quietly, I will automatically into meditation.

Straight away I will repeat my mantra. I do not know whether I listen to your suggestions or I have fallen asleep.

C: Doesn't matter, how do you feel now?

PG: Throughout the process, I felt I have gone through a deep meditation. I felt very calm and peaceful.

4.1.7.2 Description of the Second Session

This session was a continuation from the first session. Participant G saw an image of her mother's face when she talked about her mother. It was a face of seeking love. The participant felt that her mother was asking for her daughter's care and love; she was feeling guilt and regret for not being able to be with her mother. A sudden heaviness was felt on her shoulder.

The Eye Movement Dissociation and Reprocessing (EMDR) technique was applied to ease the participant's feeling of guilt and regret. The participant was asked to decide on an image of her mother as the node for processing. Meanwhile, her negative emotion was the feeling of guilt and regret. Her body sensation was the heaviness on her shoulder. The positive notion was her wish to live well despite what had happened.

It was after the sixth set of 24 left-right movements that the participant could not see the image of her mother. The participant claimed that she was feeling fine.

C: What about the image of your mother?

PG: No more.

C: What about your regret and your shoulder?

PG: Shoulder is alright. Regret...feeling that I cannot do anything anymore (laughing).

The therapist induced the healing white light therapy to enhance her wellness, and pseudo-orientate her faith of wellness for the future. She was feeling firm and stable.

PG: My heart is feeling stable and firm.

C: Throughout the therapy, you are feeling stable and firm?

PG: Ya, it's the feeling of standing firmly. It is completely living in the present.

The participant was truly resolved of her feeling of guilt toward her mother. It was not only healing that took place, but also in the process that participant was able to gain insights for living well. Furthermore, she gained a sense of spiritual sensation to completely live in the present.

After the first part of the second session, the therapist shared her experience of EMDR with Participant G. As the therapist was sharing, a flashback appeared in the participant's mind. It was her mother's face, a face that expressed rejection. The participant felt pain in her heart and her hand was feeling heavy as well. She revealed that the heaviness in her hand signified that she was longing for love, support and care.

EMDR therapy was initiated with the image of rejection, the participant's feeling of hurt and the sensation of heaviness in the hand. After the first set of left right movements, the counselor stopped and asked the participant how she felt.

PG: I am floating, not sitting on the chair. My hand not so heavy as before. My heart is a bit heavy, the image of my mother not so clear.

The therapist asked the participant to stay with the situation, she continued another set of left right movements. As soon as the therapist finished the left right movement, she asked the participant about her situation.

PG: I can't see my mother anymore. I still feel the floating sensation with my hand a bit heavy. But my heart feels the loving sensation.

The therapist again asked the participant to stay with the situation. She did another set of left right movement. Upon finishing, the therapist stopped and asked the participant how she felt.

C: How is now?

PG: No more floating. I am sitting on the chair firmly. No more heaviness in my hand. My mother's image has disappeared. I feel there is an energy of warmth and love beside me, on the left side of me.

C: Just now, your heart was feeling love, what about now?

PG: No more feeling, no love, no hate, nothing.

C: How do you describe this sort of feeling?

PG: Very peaceful and calm. It is a feeling of firmness. It is like being here.

No more connection between me and my mother. Suddenly I felt she is herself, I am myself, just that. This is my world, a feeling of firmness here.

The process of this second part of therapy was amazing. Even the participant did not expect the sensation of the fetus emerging so real during the conversation. The outcome of therapy was an enhancement for Participant G to completely feel free from the feeling of rejection as a female child. She was given the bonus of feeling firm. She could differentiate herself from the impact of her mother. Participant G has experienced a great insight and a precious spiritual sensation with the energy of warmth and love beside her. At that moment of therapy, the therapist too felt that Participant G was longing for motherly love.

4.1.7.3 Description of the Third Session

Participant G shared about the removal of her ovary ten years ago. The cancerous ovary had developed since birth. This was the doctor's statement to her; she was told that the rate for recovery was quite high. She underwent chemotherapy treatment and was able to recover. Due to her left ovary removal, there was speculation on whether she will be able to conceive after marriage. Meanwhile she found that her boyfriend was not really concerned or considerate over her situation. She was always feeling wrong and misunderstood. Eventually, they broke up. When she talked about her experience with her boyfriend, she could still feel the wrong in the relationship.

EMDR therapy was utilized. The participant picked an image of a pig to represent her ex-boyfriend, with the feeling of wrong; the therapy took place subsequently. The therapist started the left right movement 24 times. The therapist stopped the movement and asked for the participant's feedback.

PG: I still can see the image of the pig, but it seems there is a layer of partition in between.

C: What is that partition?

PG: Looks like a piece of glass. The image is not so clear.

C: What about the feeling of wrong?

PG: During the process of left right movement just now, my heart suddenly was open and I felt relieved.

C: How is the feeling of relieved?

PG: Very calm and peaceful.

The therapist continued doing the left right movement with participant G. The image of the pig disappeared and her mind was blank. The therapist decided to do

another set of left right movement to enhance the participant's feeling of confidence to live well. She asked the participant to think of the positive notion to live well.

C: What about now?

PG: Very peace and calm. I saw a blossoming lotus on a lake.

C: How do you interpret that lotus?

PG: It is beautiful. When things are being let go, everything is still fine and well.

The psychotherapeutic process moved on with ego strengthening on her faith for the future, with the positive energy boosting her confidence. The participant felt calm and peaceful throughout the process.

4.1.7.4 Description of the Fourth Session

An expressive art activity of a Life Size Portrait was applied to enhance the participant's self-knowledge and self-awareness. Through the making of her life size portrait, she had put in the chakras that were significant in her life now (as shown in Figure 4.16). The crown chakra related to the divine guidance, the throat chakra is related to communication and the heart chakra is associated with her feelings and emotions in which she aimed to impart love to others.



Figure 4.16. Participant G's life size portrait: The chakra energy.

During the psychotherapeutic process, the participant shared about her throat chakra; the color blue was used to signify her effort of letting go of past negative thoughts and characters.

PG: Anything which is bad. For instance: indiscipline and prolongation. Let myself free from it.

C: In the process, how do you change?

PG: Determination, do my best to change. I feel that I have not completely changed. On certain aspects, I try to discontinue the character.

C: Which aspects have you changed?

PG: For instance, my friends ask me out for tea when I am working. Previously I would entertain them but now I will finish my work first.

When the participant continued to reveal about her heart chakra, she realized there was the sensation of anger within her. It was because she longed for recognition for what she had done for her family and the community. As she was connecting the philosophy of relationship among the people on earth, all human relationships will end when a person dies. Her paradigm shifted from feeling burden to the willingness of giving charitable services. She will provide any charitable service because the heart is doing it, it is not forced but an act of one's willingness.

C: You need to take care of your father, how do you adjust yourself?

PG: Learning to let go of the old paradigm. Not to log myself inside the old framework. Though sometimes I feel tired and angry, but I will do what I can, hopefully I will free myself from the negative thoughts.

As soon as the participant touched on her head chakra, she began to feel vibrant. She would like to be a little angel to help people. She would also like to spread the yoga philosophy. She felt that the energy from her throat chakra was hinting her to communicate clearly whenever she expressed herself.

C: What is the reason you put a flower on your head chakra?

PG: I feel human has unlimited resources. Perhaps I need to discover the resources, develop them and spread them.

There were some resources in which the participant has determined through her chakra energy, such as her generosity, being compassionate and helpful. In the midst of admitting her resources, she revealed her jealousy of friendship. She was aware that she needed to let go of the feeling of jealousy.

C: How are you going to deal with the feeling of jealousy?

PG: Learning to let go. I do not wish myself to be like that!

C: What do you see from your life size portrait?

PG: Probably it connects with my heart chakra. I need to free myself from the old self.

The psychotherapy session was continued with parts therapy, which was aimed at balancing the participant's resources with her negative emotions. The therapist asked the participant to place her negative emotions on her left palm whereas her resources were placed on her right palm. She suggested that the participant hold her two palms together.

C: As you let your right palm functions, you put your palms together, how do you feel?

PG: Now, I feel both palms are balance.

C: You feel balance, what does that mean to you?

PG: Real life and spiritual life must be balance, because it is not balance at the moment.

C: Now you can bring your resources back to your heart.

The participant was awoken.

C: Do you have anything to say?

PG: When I put my palm on my heart chakra just now, I feel comfortable.

As participant G has experienced and gained insights from her life size portrait, she has realized the connection between the three chakras and this will help her to develop her resources in order to live a better life.

4.1.7.5 Description of the Fifth Session:

In this session, the therapist asked the participant to list out on a piece of paper the events that have impacted her from age zero to 37. This was to determine firstly the needs for therapy and secondly the participant's level of self understanding.

Looking at her life journey, the participant revealed she has let go of the desire to find a soul mate. She has actually found her direction in life. She did not allow any other things to disturb her wants.

C: When you look back about intimacy and marriage, any feeling about that?

PG: No, I have let go of it, especially after the retreat last week. Marriage is no more in my life goal.

When she talked about the problem of indiscipline, she was quite confident that she could cope with her work. It was a matter of her mind or heart wanting to dissolve her indiscipline pattern. She needed determination to stop chatting online when she was working.

As participant G pondered upon her family, she realized her family members were affecting her temperament. Since her two sisters have married and her mother has passed away, she felt she was bearing the burden of facing her third sister who suffers from depression. She could not control her anger though she knew she was facing a depressed person whom she needed to ignore to cope with the situation. The therapist then decided to do parts therapy to ease her anger toward her third sister.

Parts therapy was applied to ease her anger. The feeling of anger was called out and placed on the participant's left palm, whereas the resource of love was placed on the participant's right palm. The suggestion of expanding the love on the right palm was given. When the participant felt the love expanding, she placed her right palm onto the left palm. The participant could see the love, represented by a heart shape, was red and glittering, but the anger was represented by a sword; the sword was softened by the love.

C: How do you feel now?

PG: Calm and tranquil.

C: How are your palms feeling?

PG: Right palm is glittering with a pink colored love.

C: What does that mean by pink colored love?

PG: Love is everywhere.

C: What about your left palm?

PG: No sight of the sword, but my palm is swollen. It seems the sword has gone inside.

C: The sword has gone into your palm, what does that represent?

PG: Endurance.

C: Once again you hold your right palm onto the left palm, let the love surround your left palm, see what happens.

PG: The light red energy is continuously melting the swollen part. Left palm is feeling lighter.

The suggestion was given again to expand the love energy and both palms hold for the last time. The participant felt both were different entities. The left palm was feeling blank and empty, but the right palm was sending a green energy to her eyebrow. It became grey-black in color. She was then awoken and she felt calm.

The participant was asked to externalize the grey-black energy on a piece of white paper (as shown in Figure 4.17). She drew the image of what she has seen during therapy. When the participant looked at the image, she felt that the grey-black energy was the weakness of her spiritual life.

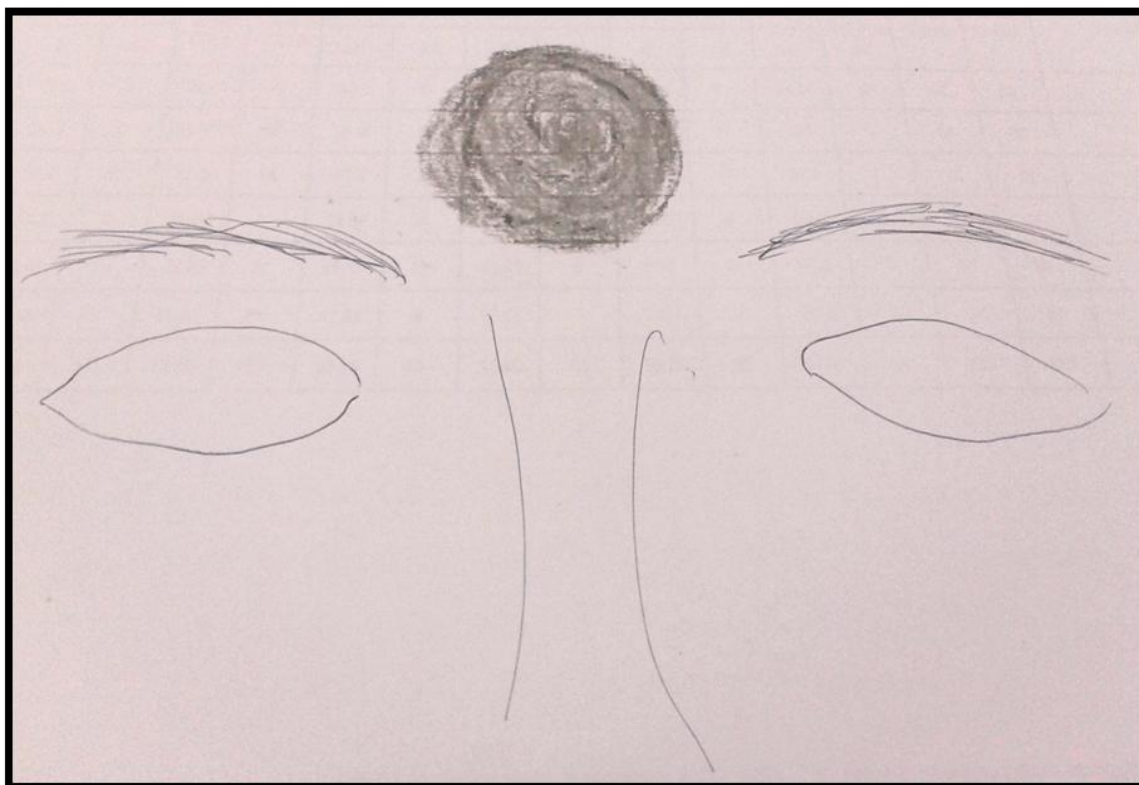


Figure 4.17. Participant G's depiction of the grey black energy.

Participant G said she was not disciplined enough to practice meditation twice a day. There was also the commandment and truth in yoga that connects to human behavior which she thought she has not really followed and practiced. She felt that she needed to work harder on her meditation to gain spiritual advancement.

PG: Feeling like taking out the grey black energy, that will be better.

C: Do you have confidence to do that?

PG: I should be able to.

C: If you have taken out the grey black energy, what might be the image?

PG: Orange, when I was saying grey black energy has to disappear, I actually see an image in orange (as shown in figure 4.18).

C: What will be the message for you?

PG: Should take out the grey black color, my spiritual life will be better.

The whole process of therapy has given participant G an opportunity to look at her inner self. The core of her being has hinted her to be aware of her discipline on yoga practice. She realized the message of the energy flow was a foreshadow given to her. She needed time and space to seriously practice what she believed was good for her in order to achieve her goal in life.

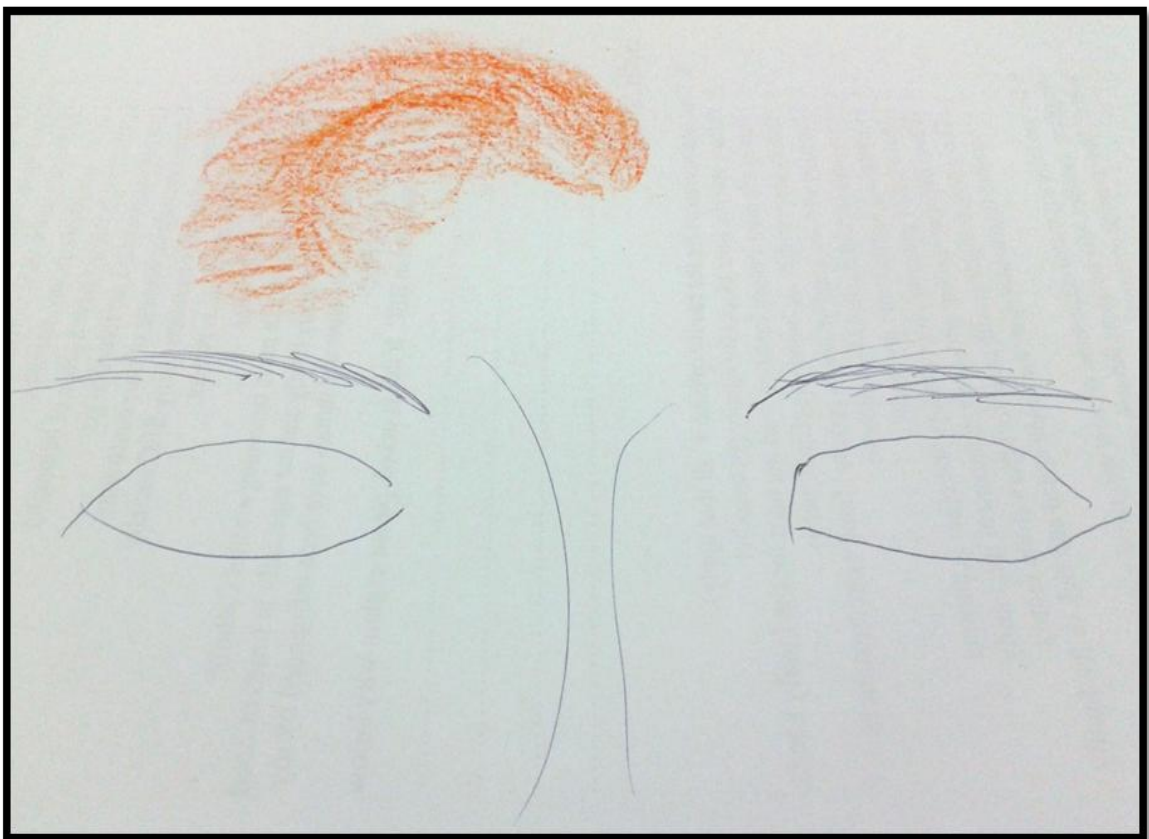


Figure 4.18. Participant G's depiction of the orange energy.

4.1.7.6 Description of the Sixth Session

Participant G has shared about her mood change mainly caused by her family members.

In this session, the map of family origin was used to explore her family dynamics.

Participant G revealed that the family resources consisted of the helpful spirit among the sisters; all of them are well educated and financially independent. The participant has discovered her reluctance to say no to help her family members even when she is very busy.

PG: Trying my best to say no. I feel that I need to learn to let go and say no. No need to worry whether problem can be solved, they (her sisters) know how to solve their own problems.

C: You are aware ya!

PG: I know my problem, I need some time to change.

As for the participant, the strongest she had was her spiritual practice. It has helped her to change cognitively, psychologically, emotionally and physically. At this point in time, her concern was her third sister who has been diagnosed with depression. She has been finding ways to equip herself to deal with her sister's temperament.

Subsequently, parts therapy and self-integration dissociation were used to ease the participant's problem in coping with the temperament of her third sister. The part that was influencing her was her emotion. It was suggested that this emotion be placed on her left palm. The participant's resource to control her emotion was the part of letting go. The part of letting go was placed on her right palm.

C: Right, your right palm will hold onto your left palm, the energy of letting go will surround the emotion. What do you discover?

PG: The energy has dissolved the emotion.

C: Is the emotion still there?

PG: No, it has been dissolved by the energy of letting go.

C: What happened to the energy?

PG: It is spreading.

C: Alright, let it spread.

PG: It has stopped gradually.

C: How do you feel now?

PG: Very calm and peaceful.

In addition, the therapist used the self-integration dissociation technique to help the participant to separate her inner self from the outside world by using her resources of calmness and letting go.

Participant G felt calm and tranquil after therapy. She has learned a method to cope with her sister's temperament, in complement with another way which was using the spirit of the four phrases, "I am sorry", "forgive me", "thank you" and "I love you" to enhance positive energy around the family.

4.1.7.7 Description of the Seventh Session

The wheel of influence was applied initially in this session to strengthen participant G's resources and tying up loose ends. She has revealed some of her experiences that made her become who she is. The most significant resource with her was the practice of meditation and yoga. Ever since she started her yoga meditation, everything seemed to change gradually. She was no longer "stubborn" with what she wanted in life; she has more resilience. Her ability to let go of things has increased. She was more composed in dealing with the people around her.

C: You started meditation, what is the greatest change?

PG: Not so "stubborn" anymore. I am able to let go of many things.

Even her relationship with her third sister has begun to change recently. She is able to control herself and send the wave of love to her sister, to generate positive energy between them. The spirit of love has zero limitation, but she only used it at home by repeating the four phrases in her heart: “I am sorry”, “forgive me”, “thank you” and “I love you”.

C: How do you describe the change?

PG: Spreading the wave of love.

The participant admitted she sometimes loved others more than herself, which she thought was good. However, she was aware of keeping a balance for herself. Meanwhile, she was also letting go of the burden that she thought she need not take up.

Through meditation she is becoming mindful and she discerns well when she connects herself with the things around her. Anyhow, she was still lacking the discipline in controlling her schedule between work and leisure. The ego state therapy was utilized to enhance her self-discipline. The participant was asked to decide the two parts that were going to be used for therapy. She decided the part “exam” to represent her perseverance and persistence. The part “exam” has helped her to persevere to finish her ACCA exam. The part “internetting” was representing her indisciplined behavior.

As the therapist has successfully facilitated both “exam” and “internetting”, the participant was asked to let both parts communicate with each other.

PG: Cannot finish work, no more internetting.

C: What do “exam” say?

PG: Work has not finished done, must not visit internet.

C: What do “internetting” say?

PG: I know, I know, internetting a while only, will continue to work. “Exam” tell “internetting”, completely no internetting, until work finished, then only internetting.

C: What happened to “internetting”?

PG: “internetting” accept the suggestion of “exam”.

Therapy continued with ego strengthening the participant’s resources. At the same time, the therapist strengthened the participant’s persistence to stop internetting before work. After the participant has awoken from trance, she felt strengthened during therapy.

PG: Throughout the process, I was blur during trance. I am feeling calm and peace. I can feel the message “exam” is conveying.

C: What is the message?

PG: Must be self-disciplined, I must persist to be disciplined.

The ego state of “exam” was strong enough to take control over the ego state of “internetting”. This will be a good sign for participant G to start disciplining herself in her time and schedule at work. She further hoped that she would be able to enhance her practice of yoga and meditation as well.

4.1.7.8 Summary of the Case Report of Participant G

Participant G was incorporating her yoga meditation with hypnosis in the first session of psychotherapy. She revealed that she had gone through a deep meditation and she felt very calm and peaceful. The second session involved the healing of the hurt and guilt she has been carrying for quite some times. She felt an energy with a warm and loving sensation and she was liberated from the feeling of rejection as a female child. In the third session, she saw a beautiful blossoming lotus floating on a lake and she felt life is wonderful when she was able to let go of her past hurtful experiences.

Participant G began to connect her chakra condition with her human weaknesses and resources in the fourth session. She was mindful toward various situations that

needed changes; such as freeing herself from the old self. In the fifth session, participant G was encountering the changes of energy within herself which was hinting her to enhance her spiritual life to a higher level. She needed to take out the grey-black energy and substitute it with the orange energy by disciplining herself between the practice of meditation and work.

She has revealed more of her plans for the future that are based on her yoga philosophy. She would like to give her time more to practicing meditation and charitable work. She has her own philosophy on how to obtain her goal in life. However, she needs to work on her self-discipline and take care of her physical health before she can move on to the path of self-fulfillment.

4.2 A Summary of the Therapist's Heuristic Reflection on the Psychotherapeutic Process

The therapist has divided the stages in the psychotherapeutic process into four levels. She considered her personal reflection after each psychotherapy session an important task for her to process herself and recorded her personal insights. By pondering on the reflection questions, she was corresponding with the phase of immersion in the heuristic inquiry. Further on, she would dwell herself in the state of incubation while writing her self-reflection; this is to enable the inner tacit knowledge to come to light. As she was reviewing her reflection, she started to conceptualize her experience and gained insights. When she discovered new meaning from the insights, she was involved with the process of illumination followed by the process of explication when she organized the whole units of meaning in the form of composite depiction (Moustakas, 1990).

4.2.1 Level One: The Mixed Feeling of Excitement and Anxiety

Level one involved a great deal of emotional draining and the process of self talking. In the midst of dealing with my emotional and psychological stress, I was practicing mindfulness in order to develop emotional wisdom. Mindfulness helped me to be aware of my emotional state when it triggers. When I was more cognizant and accepting of the feelings that emerged, I have more control over my actions and behaviors (Barr, 2011; Loh, 2008; Gerber, 2009; Goleman, 2001).

“I felt the excitement within me when I was able to imagine I am on the path to collect data from seven women of different family background. It will be interesting to apply what I have learned from the counseling courses. I will then know the effectiveness of these counseling and psychotherapeutic tools and techniques.”

“On the other hand, I felt anxious because I was not confidence enough to practice on the tools and techniques! What if I fail to help my participants with these tools and techniques? My mind was filling with uncertainty. However, I was able to calm myself with the practice of meditation and self-hypnosis. I have found contemplating on the word of God an effective way to deal with my fluctuating situation.”

(Self Reflection, 18-1-2012).

4.2.2 Level Two: Early Attempt in the Psychotherapeutic Process

Level two has been a trial period for me to start collecting data with my participants. I was enthusiastic plus a little bit of tense in carrying out my role as a therapist. I have insisted from the beginning to pray and called upon the divine to dwell with me

throughout the entire process of the psychotherapy sessions (See, 2009; Tan, 1994). I was aware of my faith in God as a Catholic Christian. The practice of mindfulness (Barr, 2011; Goleman, 2001) has helped me to be aware of my own value and the subjectivity I have toward spirituality. I was convinced with the idea that spirituality, psychology and value-based culture need to be integrated in order to achieve transformation, wholeness and vitality (Briggs & Rayle, 2005; Corey, 2009; Lonborg & Bowen, 2004; Lukoff, 1998; Machinga & Friedman, 2013; Pargament, 2007; Richards & Bergin, 2007).

“I began the psychotherapy sessions with the participants. In order to know my participants better as well as enhanced their resources, I started using the map of the family origin and the wheel of influence of the Satir therapeutic model as the psychotherapeutic tools. Although it was an early attempt for me, after a few sessions with the participants, I found the impact of these tools very encouraging. The psychotherapeutic tools were indeed enhanced the participant’s self awareness and self understanding. This was the outcome I longed for! The initial results of the psychotherapeutic process, which consisted of self awareness and the emergence of the spiritual experiences, were actually acknowledging my intuition and decision on the early psychotherapy framework. It has strengthened my ability and confidence to further practice the instruments in order to gain momentum to meet the objective of the psychotherapeutic process.”

(Self Reflection, 27-5-2012)

4.2.3 Level Three: Transpersonal Spiritual Experiences in the Psychotherapeutic Process

Level three was encouraging and consoling. I have acknowledged that spirituality is a basic condition of human existence (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999). Spirituality within my faith and belief was synchronized with some of the participants' manifested spiritualities. The perspective of values of mine is actually in harmony with the spiritual worldviews of the participants (Richards & Bergin, 2007). As we moved into deeper internal process, we were enhancing toward a higher level of an adult ego (Kaspro & Scotton, 1999; Wilber, 2001).

I found hypnotherapy indeed effective in restructuring the mental images and integrating the fragmented parts to becoming whole. It has brought healing and restoration to the self. Hypnotherapy is directly accessing the deepest levels of the unconscious, of intuitive certainty, and of the soul / self itself. It is a tool to unify all the fragmented parts of the participants' psyche in order for the transpersonal self to evolve out from within the participant (Zimberoff & Hartman, 1999). I was also convinced with the effectiveness of the expressive arts therapy. It has encouraged the participants to engage with self expression and creative connection. The self expression of the participants was enhancing greater self understanding of their unconscious through interpretation of psychic structure as shown in their art work. It has allowed the participants' inner psychic material to evolve and transformed resulting in emotional reparation, conflict resolution, and a sense of well-being. The process of creative connection has stimulated self exploration. The process was gently allowing the participants to awaken to new possibilities that touched their inner self (Baranovich, 2009; Malchiodi, 2005).

I am utilizing humanistic treatment approaches that provide its meaning construction to incorporate harmoniously with the participant's spiritual orientation. When the client is engaged with transpersonal spiritual phenomena, various qualities such as love, power, peace and joy were manifested. Cultivation of these qualities into the self of the participant has a transforming effect which has cognitive, emotional, and physical results, whereby the participant reoriented her attitude toward life and toward the Divine (Machinga & Friedman, 2013). Hence, the spiritual wisdom fostered the inner self to discover the meaning in life. The participants eventually found their purpose in life (DiLorenzo, 2009; Frankl, 1986; Pitchford, 2008; Powell, 1995; Yalom, 1980).

"I was beginning to build foundation to enhance spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. I could feel the presence of the divine whenever there were spiritual elements emerged during the psychotherapeutic process. The outcome of the spiritual experiences was unexpected but fulfilling. To my amazement, different participant has different interpretation toward their spiritual experiences. Though the messages of the spiritual experiences were hinting directly to the participants, these messages were indirectly providing insights for me as the therapist. I was receiving the blessings too! When I pondered upon the psychotherapeutic process, I was touched and healed to a certain extent. I could feel my 'self' transforming and integrating, and I could feel the congruency within. Spiritual experiences were transpersonal, it was beyond control and it was bringing hope and growth to the self."

(Self Reflection, 22-10-2012)

4.2.4 Level Four: Creative Synthesis of the Psychotherapy Journey

Level four was coming to the end of the psychotherapy journey. I felt satisfied and contented with the insights I have gained from the psychotherapy sessions.

Spiritualization is indeed associated with the human growth that is connected with the transpersonal theory. It was the God-ward movements which developed an inner, personal relationship with the Divine that has brought the participants into deeper connection with the inner self (Kaspro & Scotton, 1999; Machinga & Friedman, 2013; Thompson, 1982; Vaughan, 2000). The transpersonal spiritual experiences have opened the pathway for us to feel we are connected in the “self” deep down within (Satir, 1988). We were able to access our creative self to develop a collective depiction (Lo, 2011; Moskovici, 2006).

“Throughout the psychotherapeutic process, I was resonating with most of the spiritual experiences that the participants owned. I felt the connection between us has increased over time by the end of the psychotherapy journey. I have invited the participants to synthesize the spiritual journey in the form of a poem and a drawing. To my surprise, the participants felt obliged to contribute their ideas to compose the collective depiction on the spiritual journey. One of the participants was actually helping me to do the final finishing of the drawing.”

“When I was writing the poem of the spiritual journey, I was inspired by the Divine revelation to use the words that were resonating with the drawing. This was the process of our lived experience being externalized and visualized in the form of creative expression. I was especially touched by the depth of spirituality we shared despite our different family background and different spiritual orientation.”

(Self Reflection, 25-12-2012)

4.3 The Participants' Spiritual Experiences

The research study has revealed that the participants have gone through a series of psychotherapy sessions. It has shown that the psychotherapeutic practice is an authentic participatory practice. It involves the essence of spirituality being heuristically dwelled in the process. This activity enhances transpersonal and grounded operations on spirituality into tacit knowing, illuminating and explicating the answers to the research questions of (a) What are the participants' spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process? (b) How do the participants perceive and describe the experience of feeling connected with spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process? (c) What is the relationship between the spiritual experiences and the self of the participants in the psychotherapeutic process? and (d) How do the participants and the therapist describe the process of integrating spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process?

During the indwelling process of the psychotherapy sessions, many amusing incidents happened which were unexpected. Spiritual characteristics started emerging and developing. All the participants have revealed that they have indeed gone through a fruitful journey in their life. Their spirituality had been evolved in different ways; some were beyond words. All of them were engaged firmly with their spiritual self. Ultimately, the consolidated categories of the spiritual experiences were identified, illustrated and discussed in the form of a report in the following section.

4.3.1 The Process of Self Integration

The self-integration process is an alchemical process (Gomori & Adaskin, 2009; Moore, 1992). It is the process that is leading the participants toward their goals in life. The process of self-integration involves the participants' personal spiritual growth, the

connection with the inner self and the transformation of the self. The connection with the inner self is the essential step for the participants to get in touch with the core of their being (Kasprow & Scotton, 1999; Satir, 1988; Thompson, 1982). When the door of connection has been opened, the participants will discover more parts of themselves, which are fascinating in various ways. As the connection and the association of parts continued, the integrated experiences will reinforce the participants to make changes in their lives (Carney, 2007; Satir et al., 2006).

The process of integrating for participant A was described as a journey of coming home to the divine (as shown in Table 4.1). She has gone through some interpersonal relationship struggles and has made the decision to foster her wellbeing.

Table 4.1

The Process of Self Integration—Participant A

Sub-categories	Personal Growth	Self Transformation
Participant A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. befriending her shadow 2. reconcile with her inner self 3. involved zealously with charitable activities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. coming home to the divine 2. endurance for the nasty environment has increased 3. longing for spiritual qualities 4. building a world of love

Note. Adapted from Psychotherapy Transcript and Summary of Case Report, pp. 94-113.

In the process of befriending her shadow, she was able to reconcile with her inner self and bring balance between the shadow and the ego (Jung, 1959, as cited in Singer, 1994, p. 165; Monbourquette, 2001). Participant A was able to transcend and eventually make peace with her inner self on the journey of coming home to the divine. She has found herself improving in enduring the harsh environment in the poor areas of Calcutta. She felt the divine was calling her for a certain mission and she was

enthusiastically involving herself in charitable activities. She was longing for the spiritual qualities such as genuineness, goodness and holiness whereby she aimed to build a world of love.

In the case of participant B, the process of integration involved struggling and keeping balance between a worldly life and spiritual life. She has placed the divine calling as her priority. She wanted to discipline herself in prayer (Vaughan, 2000). She was aware that one way to discipline herself was to listen more and talk less. She felt that the inner integration not only restricted her cognitive thinking but the mechanism has to be strong enough to enhance her into action. She realized that it will be good when the heart is involved to strengthen her good deeds. She wanted to create the atmosphere of harmony and communion with the people around her. She aimed to become a good daughter of the universe by becoming a nun.

Table 4.2

The Process of Self Integration—Participant B

Sub-categories	Personal Growth	Self Transformation
Participant B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. balancing between Spiritual life and worldly Life. 2. create the atmosphere of harmony. 3. connection with the Self. 4. listen more, talk less. 5. becoming more discipline. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the heart is involved in good deeds. 2. becoming a good daughter of the Universe. 3. God is the priority, moving towards the direction of the divine.

Note. Adapted from Psychotherapy Transcript and Summary of Case Report, pp. 114-128.

Participant C was well connected to her inner self after she had made peace with herself from her past hurt experiences. She was able to forgive and to adjust the way

she thought (Downing, 2006; Spinelli, 2008). She was looking forward to reconciliation with her family members. She would want to follow her inner voice to get close to the divine. She began to stay keen on giving service to the sick and the needy despite her thalassemia illness. She also would like to sustain her closeness with the divine by enhancing her prayer life as she felt prayer will bring her closer to happiness (Vaughan, 2000).

Table 4.3

The Process of Self Integration—Participant C

Sub-categories	Personal Growth	Self Transformation
Participant C	1. making peace with her inner self.	1. realized she needs to get closer to the divine.
	2. reconciliation.	2. enhancing her prayer life.
	3. listening to the inner voices.	3. intention to serve the sick and the needy.
	4. getting closer to the divine	

Note. Adapted from Psychotherapy Transcript and Summary of Case Report, pp. 129-140.

As for participant D, She started experiencing inner integration when her negative emotions, such as judgmental and depression, were transformed into positive emotions, such as peaceful and composed. She was able to cultivate creative methods to cope with her problems (Lo, 2011). She was also aware of the paradigm shift of her thoughts (Spinelli, 2008). She felt the freedom of heart and the freedom of ability, mutually influencing each other in a cyclical manner. She found herself grounded with the feeling of stability within the core of her being. This was the spiritual experience that met her need. She described this momentum as being helpful in controlling her mood swings. Her resiliency to endure her mother has increased. She realized she was

able to forgive her mother and accept her just the way she is. The spiritual experience has opened her mind. She has confidence and courage to face her real self. She was waiting for “the being” to fill her with the sense of security. She would discipline herself to practice meditation in order to sustain the spiritual wisdom she has obtained (Vaughan, 2000). The spiritual enhancement of gaining the momentum of stability within has enforced the self to be vibrant to sustain the inner life force (Vaughan, 2000).

Table 4.4

The Process of Self Integration—Participant D

Sub-categories	Personal Growth	Self Transformation
Participant D	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. cultivating creative ways to cope with her problems. 2. differentiating herself from her mother. 3. forgive herself and others: freedom of heart and freedom of ability. 4. peaceful within. 5. facing her real self: dealing with the feeling of fear and insecurity. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. transformation from negative emotions to positive emotions. 2. paradigm shift. 3. momentum of stability in the core of her being: confidence. 4. sustain the stable and firm sensation by practicing meditation.

Note. Adapted from Psychotherapy Transcript and Summary of Case Report, pp. 141-157.

In the case of participant E, she has experienced a significant transformation when she was able to step out of her comfort zone. The fear within was transformed into the helpful energy for making changes. She would like to dwell with her own self. She could feel the connection of her inner energy and the universal life force within that was giving her the message and the courage to enhance her life (Satir, 1988; Satir et al., 2006). She described the spiritual experiences as her resources that soothed her and gave her the peace of mind. She has gained the insight for knowing the strength of her intuition was actually giving her wisdom. As she was connected by the power of the

universal life force with the self, she felt the confidence and the courage to take a step out in her life to work on the areas of her life that she felt needed change. She has decided a life that could nourish her soul by networking with friends and studying psychotherapy courses should be her priority (Corey, 2009).

Table 4.5

The Process of Self Integration—Participant E

Sub-categories	Personal Growth	Self Transformation
Participant E	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. putting things into action. 2. to be my own self. 3. recognizing the divine. 4. connected to the inner self 5. nourishes her soul by networking with friends and studying counseling courses. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. making changes: Stepping out of her comfort zone. 2. paradigm shift. 3. the fear became the helpful energy. 4. integration of her inner energy and the universal life force. 5. connecting her intuition and wisdom

Note. Adapted from Psychotherapy Transcript and Summary of Case Report, pp. 158-172.

Participant F has undergone a process of transformation and integration when she was liberated from her past traumatic experiences of her husband's betrayal. She was able to let go of her prejudice toward Mainland China. She has also ended an affair with a married man. She described the process of healing as the divine providence and it was something extraordinary. She was able to reconcile with her inner self. Through the divine intervention, she was rewarded with a comfortable and tranquil state of mind. She felt grateful to the higher power and she has gained the sense of security through prayer. She has become realistic in making decisions to live a simple life with her

daughter. She felt that she will live an ordinary and healthy life after experiencing a breakthrough in life (Frankl, 1985; Lewis, 2011).

Table 4.6

The Process of Self Integration—Participant F

Sub-categories	Personal Growth	Self Transformation
Participant F	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. heart surrender to God. 2. intention to stop smoking. 3. knew the importance of prayer: gain comfort and security. 4. thanking God for her growth. 5. energized. 6. realizing her life value is to provide a good home for her daughter. 7. cleared her emotional baggage. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. liberated from her past traumatic events. 2. letting go of her prejudice toward mainland China. 3. embracing love of sharing, stays closer to the higher power. 4. freedom within after making realistic decision of letting go of an unhealthy relationship with a married man. 5. breakthrough in life.

Note. Adapted from Psychotherapy Transcript and Summary of Case Report, pp. 175-196.

Participant G was liberated from the negative impact of her mother and her ex-boyfriend. She began to connect firmly with the self when she was revealing about her chakra and how she connects with her inner energy. She described there was some inner weaknesses that she needed time to work on. As she was connecting more often with the self, she was getting the messages from her inner voices (Gomori & Adaskin, 2009). She realized she needs to be more disciplined and consistent in her yoga meditation practice and her work. She was hoping that she could free herself from the old self. Her direction in life became clearer and she was preparing herself toward her goal in her present life (Frankl, 1986).

Table 4.7

The Process of Self Integration—Participant G

Sub-categories	Personal Growth	Self Transformation
Participant G	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. feeling tranquil and peaceful, firm and stable. 2. coping better with her sister's temperament. 3. being mindful with her Inner chakra energy. 4. realizing the message of the energy flow: disciplining herself. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. liberating from the impact of her mother and her ex-boyfriend. 2. realizing her life goal. 3. persistent on self discipline. 4. freeing herself from the old self.

Note. Adapted from Psychotherapy Transcript and Summary of Case Report, pp. 198-215.

The findings of this research study indicate that all the participants have acknowledged spirituality as something greater than the human self (Carney, 2007; Pargament, 2007). The participants described their spiritual experiences in a variety of ways. They acknowledged the mechanisms involved as something beyond what we as humans can fully understand. It is as if some inner spontaneous part of the personality is far more knowledgeable than the conscious portion (Kaspro & Scotton, 1999; Wilber, 2000). This inner portion was constantly evolving, developing and eventually incorporated with the self image into enlightenment to form one whole self personality (Baranovich, 2009; Chopra, 2014; Corey & Corey, 2002; Hall & Nordby, 1999; Jacobi, 1973; Moore, 1992; Yapko, 2011). Most participants (for instance, participant A, participant B, participant C, participant F and participant G) were having a genuine contact with the Divine and the transcendent may have been flooded into their consciousness in the form provided by their spiritual affiliation (Cunningham, 2011; Laughlin, 2013). The experiences of spirituality have served as a resource and strength

for the participants' self care system. The spiritual experiences have enhanced the participants' ability to endure negativity which has brought them to capture some of their weaknesses. This has the impact for the participants to experience inner freedom and inner peace. The qualities of love, peace, freedom, and joy have caused cognitive, emotional and physical results, characterized by a reorientation toward life and toward the Divine (Machinga & Friedman, 2013; Satir, 1988; Sperry, 2001; Thompson, 1982). The spiritual experiences were enabling them to process along their journey into the spiritual depths of their soul (Baranovich, 2009). All the participants believed they have encountered the divine in the psychotherapeutic process. It was the divine in the spiritual experiences that has provided a sense of hope and trust for them to struggle through the difficult situations. This perspective was also allowing the process of healing, growth and transformation to take place in the psychotherapeutic process. The participants have shown their interest to connect and deepen their relationship with others (Corey & Corey, 2002; Samah & Isa, 2009; Satir et al., 2006; Sperry, 2001; Vaughan, 2000). They have gained more faith and support to take up the responsibilities to improve their life (DiLorenzo, 2009; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; Pitchford, 2008; Yalom, 1980). They have possessed the quality of owning themselves (Frankl, 1986; Powell, 1995). The "self" within them has been stabilized and strengthened to sustain the momentum of the inner life force (Satir et al., 2006; Vaughan, 2000). The participants have realized their vocation and they were making the effort to make sense of their dream. They have indeed found the means of healing, growth and transformation.

From the perspective of the researcher / therapist, she could see the inner transformation and self-integration taking place in various forms. It was in the form of experiencing the impact of inner healing, the experiences of emotional freedom, the feeling of being firmly grounded, the experience of self-integration and the experience

of breaking through from the old self (Carney, 2007; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999). The researcher considered the connection between each participant and the therapist was central in integrating spirituality within the psychotherapeutic process. The feeling of connection involved a larger community, interconnectedness with nature, other people and to a larger whole (Bentheim, 2005; Lee, 2001; Satir et al., 2006). Spirituality was fostering the sacredness of connection to move to a greater depth, and this connection in turn led to healing and empowerment to the being of both therapist and participants. These spiritual experiences will be the starting point of the process of individuation in Jungian terms and the journey to self-actualization in Maslow terms (Corey & Corey, 2002; Maslow, 1962, as cited in Kasproh & Scotton, 1999; Singer, 1994).

4.3.2 The Expression of the Spiritual Experiences: The Explicit Versus the Implicit

Various expressions of spiritual experiences emerged in this research. The sensation of spiritual experiences was divided into two categories, namely the explicit and the implicit. The explicit spiritual experiences were those expressed in the overt and clear manner, whereas the implicit expressions were subtle in their own way. Among the spiritual experiences, there were theistic and non-theistic experiences.

Most of the participants were expressing their spiritual experiences explicitly. Participant A saw a vision of a red beating heart with dark smoky back ground during the healing white light therapy. She could identify herself with the beating heart as her position in life. She recognized the beating heart as herself; she was surrounded with dark smoke which represented the influence of friends. When she was pondering upon the vision, she was enlightened by the insight that she was anxious about her interpersonal relationships. Her shadow desired friendship very much and she was struggling between firmness and compromising. The shadow has indeed given her a

spiritual awakening. The message from the self was informing her to be firm in making decisions. She could catch hold of the message and deliberately make peace with herself. She will keep reminding herself to handle life situations in a firm and prompt way. It was by the spiritual experience with the vision in her mind that she was able to reinforce the self and unify the opposite tendencies of her personality (Corey, 2009; Monbourquette, 2001; Northcutt, 2010). Meanwhile, participant A's flu and headaches were healed by the white light which she has signified as the Holy Spirit. She has also experienced the spiritual element implicitly when the white light was powerful enough to overturn the dark spot; she associated the white light as divine intervention.

Table 4.8

The Expression of The Spiritual Experiences—Participant A

Sub-categories	Explicit	Implicit
Participant A	1. a red beating heart with dark smoky background.	1. the white light overturning the dark spot. 2. desolate spiritual experiences: the dark spot, feeling fear and cold.

Note. Adapted from Explicit Description, pp. 109-110 and Implicit Description, pp. 103-106.

Participant B has been associating spirituality in the sand tray that she has built. It was an image of harmony and communion in the realm of the universe. This will be her vision throughout her life. She revealed the integration of her resources as the inner grace that was going to sustain her with the practice of prayer and contemplation (Vaughan, 2000). She felt the out of space sensation in the process of resource integration. She described the spiritual experience as something solid she could utilize in maintaining her inner mood of stability. She described the parts integration within

was assuring her that her heart must transform in order for her to take action to do something good and beneficial. The realization was synchronized with her goal to get close to the divine (Pargament, 2007).

Table 4.9

The Expression of The Spiritual Experiences—Participant B

Sub-categories	Explicit	Implicit
Participant B	1. associating spirituality in the sand tray: image of harmony and communion.	1. out of space sensation.

Note. Adapted from Explicit Description, pp. 114-115 and Implicit Description, pp. 120-122.

As for participant C, she was associating the chirping sound of the birds as the prompting of the divine and perceived it as the Holy Spirit. She has often heard it in the healing white light therapy. She felt the divine was calling her to reconcile with those who have hurt her. She has also experienced brightness in front of her eyes. She identified the bright light as the higher power. It was strengthening her with faith, hope and charity. Her heart felt contented and firm. Both the chirping sound of the birds and the bright light had helped to enhance her relationship with the divine (Sperry & Shafranske, 2009).

Table 4.10

The Expression of The Spiritual Experiences—Participant C

Sub-categories	Explicit	Implicit
Participant C	1. chirping sound of the birds.	1. brightness in front of the eyes. 2. feeling contented and firm within.

Note. Adapted from Explicit Description, pp. 129-135 and Implicit Description, pp. 138-139.

Participant E was associating the bird with the divine who granted wisdom, calmness, comfort and happiness. She often had visions during trance. One of her visions was connected to her preparation for the change in her life. She saw a plant that was waiting for the flower to blossom; it seemed about to burst which has brought the message that asked her to take up the risk. On another occasion, Participant E saw a purple circle within the light above her head; she defined it as wisdom. She was going to dwell with it as her mind told her to follow her intuition because it was part of her wisdom. The integration of the inner energy and the universal life force was helping Participant E to recognize the association between the spiritual experiences with the self. The self was restoring her life force through the wisdom she has gained (Satir, 1988; Vaughan, 2000). Furthermore, there was the white light beaming on her left shoulder; participant E described it as the divine presence and she felt comfort in her heart.

Table 4.11

The Expression of The Spiritual Experiences—Participant E

Sub-categories	Explicit	Implicit
Participant E	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. signified the bird as the divine who granted calmness, comfort and happiness. 2. visions of a plant that is going to burst, a purple circle, a beaming white light on her left shoulder and at the top of her head. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. integration of her inner energy and the universal life force. 2. feeling peace, secure and freedom within.

Note. Adapted from Explicit Description, pp. 164-170 and Implicit Description, pp. 166-170.

In the case of participant F, she was struggling between her ego and her desired ideal home. Jung (1959, as cited in Singer, 1994) revealed that the ego's confrontation with figures of the unconscious is a counterpart in the inner experience of the ego's

confrontation with people and situations in the environment. The process of the confrontation is directed toward achieving harmony with the totality of the being (p. 216). For participant F, her ego was aware that the intimate relationship with her boyfriend was unhealthy. By looking at her artwork, she realized her life with her daughter was simple and practical. For this reason, the bubbles of an ideal home have diminished. She was coming to terms with her 'self'. She did eventually break things off with her boyfriend after she gained courage from the power of the divine in conjunction with her determination. She has recognized the changes within when she felt the higher power strengthen her during therapy. Participant F also encountered a spiritual experience implicitly when she was touched by the suggestion "the father is embracing you like a child" during the healing white light therapy; she felt like crying. She acknowledged the "Father" as God the father in her faith. She started to have the feeling of surrendering to God. The concept of 'letting go and letting God' has started to imprint in her mind. She was feeling peace and she believed the higher power would heal her completely. Furthermore, in the ninth session, participant F was stimulated by a series of soothing music, she could hear people singing a hymnal to the Blessed Virgin Mary and when the image of Jesus emerged, she could hear the lyric "wherever you are, wherever you go, Jesus is here". These spiritual experiences have helped her to ease her fear of losing her daughter.

Table 4.12

The Expression of The Spiritual Experiences—Participant F

Sub-categories	Explicit	Implicit
Participant F	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. soothing music: hymnal to Mary and the emergence of the image of Jesus, with the lyric ‘whenever you are, whenever you go, Jesus is here’. 2. gained courage from the ego state of the divine power. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. touched by the divine Father in her faith. 2. gaining insights.

Note. Adapted from Explicit Description, pp. 189-196 and Implicit Description, pp. 178-192.

During therapy, participant G was experiencing the energy of a warming and loving sensation on the left side of her helping to liberate her from the feeling of rejection as a female child. In the following session, she saw a vision of a blossoming lotus and she felt her heart was liberated from her past hurts. She has gained inner freedom and she described her situation from this point of everything being fine once she lets go of the baggage in her life. In the fourth session, participant G revealed about the three chakra energies, namely the crown chakra, the throat chakra and the heart chakra. The connection of the chakra energies will help her to develop her resources. In the fifth session, participant G was seeing a grey-black energy turning into an orange energy which brought her the message that her spiritual life will be better if she disciplines herself to practice meditation. She described the movement of the energy with the color changing as being a reminder for her to know herself better.

Table 4.13

The Expression of The Spiritual Experiences—Participant G

Sub-categories	Explicit	Implicit
Participant G	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. vision of the blossoming lotus. 2. the connection of the chakra energies. 3. grey black energy turning Into an orange energy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. experiencing the energy of warmth and love.

Note. Adapted from Explicit Description, pp. 203-210 and Implicit Description, pp. 201-202.

On the other hand, in the case of participant D, she has experienced spirituality but did not recognize the spiritual experiences. She expressed her spiritual sensation in an implicit manner. Participant D saw a vision of a swan swimming on a lake, which gave her the feeling of being free and liberated from fear. She was uncertain whether it was the power of hypnosis that helped to heal her or the spirituality was part of the process of healing. On another occasion, participant D felt the momentum of stability in the center of her being; she did not recognize it as her inner life force. She was a little confused with the sensation until the counselor resonated with her. She began to acknowledge the integrated self.

Table 4.14

The Expression of The Spiritual Experiences—Participant D

Sub-categories	Explicit	Implicit
Participant D	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. vision of a swan on a lake. 2. momentum of stability.

Note. Adapted from Implicit Description, pp. 151-154.

From these sessions, we can see that the spiritual experiences were personal. It was therein lying on the participants to associate their spiritual experiences and interpret them. Spiritual experiences can be expressed explicitly or implicitly as long as they have brought messages of benefit to the participants. The findings of this research study indicate the expressions of various spiritualities could be described in the theistic or non-theistic perspective in relation to the participant's spiritual affiliation and spiritual orientation (Briggs & Rayle, 2005; Kelly, 2005; Richards & Bergin, 2007; Sue, 1998).

The participants with a sense of theism regarded the spiritual experiences as the higher power's presence in the psychotherapeutic process. The other participants described their spiritual experiences as something extraordinary happening within the psychotherapeutic process. However, the experiences of spirituality have enhanced them to trust that things were happening for a reason. They were allowing the process to unfold and they believed eventually they will have the answers. This perspective has fostered their human desire for relationship with a transcendent power (Briggs & Rayle, 2005; Machinga & Friedman, 2013; Satir, 1988; Sperry, 2001). The process of experiencing something that has a meaning in life was motivating the participants to improve their lives (Corey, 2009; Frankl, 1985; Lewis, 2011). The findings have indicated that some participants were probably engaged with their belief and value system (Lonborg & Bowen, 2004; Pargament, 2007; Richards & Bergin, 2007). The images which have emerged consisted of religious tradition elements. For instance: participant A and participant C were signifying the healing white light as the presence of the Holy Spirit, participant B was associating her spirituality with her Christian faith, participant F was relating her fear of losing her daughter with the Blessed Virgin Mary, and participant G was acknowledging the chakra energy with her yoga practice. The Images are the essence of knowledge in the subconscious that represent meaning and pointing to "something" which powerfully motivates behavior (Corey & Corey, 2002;

Singer, 1994). The findings also indicated the transpersonal experiences were enhancing the participants to cultivate an understanding and awareness of their worldview and sense of spirituality. By integrating awareness of the worldview and the sense of spirituality, the participants realized their existential responsibilities and they were in control of their lives (DiLorenzo, 2009; Pitchford, 2008; Yalom, 1980). Through the integration of the participants' spirituality, the "self" was restored, and spiritual wisdom was gained. They were gaining the dynamic life force to form its equilibrium within for a better self (Lee, 2001; Satir, 1988; Satir et al., 2006; Sperry, 2001). Transpersonal spiritual experiences in psychotherapy indeed are valuable as a means of connecting with the Divine, which in turn, motivates and strengthens the participants to live a value-based life.

Just as spirituality and transpersonal experiences have contributed in the psychotherapeutic process in serving the participants as a source of strength, it was also boosting the therapist's awareness toward the power of the Divine. It has opened the therapist's worldview to take a creative approach in therapy and think outside the box. By utilizing creative intervention strategies in psychotherapy such as expressive arts and hypnosis, the therapist can be flexible in meeting each of the participants' needs. Furthermore, attending to the whole person of each participant in psychotherapy was a way to honor her way of being in the world. Besides, attending to the whole person of each participant included the many aspects of human experience, which the therapist recognized as the connection between the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of the self (Satir, 1988; Sperry, 2001). All these dimensions were interconnected and have impacted each other during the psychotherapeutic process.

4.3.3 The Meaning of Life and Self Value

The emerging of the meaning in life occurred gradually when the participants were engaged with their inner self. The connection and the transformation of the self will foster the entire relation of the body, mind and spirit. The cycle of the self-transformation and the connection to the self were providing the platform for the consolidation of spiritual wisdom (Satir, 1988; Sperry, 2001; Thompson, 1982; Vaughan, 2000). The spiritual wisdom, which is supposed to be in the unconscious, will ferment and somehow find its way to the conscious realm. Ultimately, the process of the emergence of the spiritual wisdom will enhance one to gain the realization of the meaning in life (Van Deurzen, 2002).

Participant A used a pizza to describe her ideal life. She intended to put many ingredients in the pizza. She would like her life to be meaningful and colorful like the rainbow. She has found that charitable activities enlighten her life. She would like to impart her spiritual experiences to more people in her daily life. She has also acknowledged her homecoming to the divine will have a significant worth in her life. She depicted herself as a lighted candle that will bring warmth and brightness to others. She was heading to the direction of building a world of love.

Table 4.15

The Meaning of Life and Self Value—Participant A

Category	The meaning of life
Participant A	1. charitable activities. 2. impart spiritual experiences. 3. building a world of love.

Note. Adapted from Summary of the Case Report of Participant A, pp. 112-113.

Participant B has found her worth when she dwelt with the higher power. She was in the process of self-becoming. She was longing for a disciplined spiritual life. She aimed to be a good daughter of the universe and dreamt of becoming the “little flower of Theresa” emphasizing on morality, walking toward the path of loving, kindness and creating a better self. She would like to be a valuable witness to her faith by becoming a nun. With the status of a nun, she would want to bear as a witness to harmony and communion to the world; she was embracing the spirit of “us-ness” (Bentheim, 2005). She has illustrated her vision through the sand tray which depicted the characters of Isaiah 11:6-9 that signified harmony in the universe. Her self-worth was enlarged when she saw her self-value moving in a meaningful direction (Dilorenzo, 2009).

Table 4.16

The Meaning of Life and Self Value—Participant B

Category	The meaning of life
Participant B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. good daughter of the universe. 2. little flower of Theresa. 3. witness of harmony and communion. 4. becoming a nun.

Note. Adapted from Summary of The Case Report of Participant B, pp. 127-128.

Participant C found her value by answering to the divine’s calling. Apart from sustaining her prayer life with rituals and attending masses, she would like to spare her time to visit and encourage the patients in the hospital to move on with their lives even when they are sick. As she is a thalassemia patient, she will spend her time meaningfully while carry on with her ordinary life. The connection between the self

and the higher power has shed light to her inner desire that expressed her loving kindness (Carney, 2007). She was able to make meaning with the spiritual experiences.

Table 4.17

The Meaning of Life and Self Value—Participant C

Category	The meaning of life
Participant C	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. answering to divine calling. 2. sharing her life with patients in the hospital. 3. expressing loving kindness.

Note. Adapted from Summary of The Case Report of Participant C, pp. 139-140.

Participant D has experienced inner transformation and she felt confident and firm with the stability within the core of her being. She would like to engage herself with meditation and Vipasana retreat in order to put things together and see things clearly. She realized her life will be meaningful when she does something with her resources to discover talent and inspire potential in the course of becoming a trainer (Lewis, 2011). Meanwhile she was equipping herself with knowledge, skills and resources in order to achieve her goal in life and she would want to enjoy life with freedom.

Table 4.18

The Meaning of Life and Self Value—Participant D

Category	The meaning of life
Participant D	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. discover talent. 2. inspire potential. 3. put things together and see things clearly. 4. enjoy life with freedom.

Note. Adapted from Summary of The Case Report of Participant D, pp. 156-157.

Participant E found her soul being enlightened by networking with people. She would enhance the self with the divine wisdom through self-reflexive exercise, retreats and seminars. She was preparing herself for her self-betterment and the changes in life. She would nurture herself with counseling courses in order to prepare herself for a change of occupation, which could fulfill her soul. She was heading to a life that is self-fulfilling.

Table 4.19

The Meaning of Life and Self Value—Participant E

Category	The meaning of life
Participant E	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. networking with people. 2. nurturing herself with counseling courses. 3. a life that could fulfil her soul.

Note. Adapted from Summary of The Case Report of Participant E, p. 172.

Participant F found her value and worth in engaging herself with flower arrangements. It is a means of entertaining people. As she has gone through a

breakthrough in life, she just wanted to be a good mother to her daughter and provide a good home for her. She will live as an ordinary lady, nurturing her ordinary life with a prayerful and renewed spirit.

Table 4.20

The Meaning of Life and Self Value—Participant F

Category	The meaning of life
Participant F	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. work as a creative florist. 2. good mother. 3. renewed ordinary lady.

Note. Adapted from Summary of The Case Report of Participant F, p. 196.

Participant G found her meaning in life when she became involved with yoga meditation. She intended to impart the yoga philosophy to the people around as a way to help them to find their worth in life. She has started her journey of self-cultivation. She hoped to discipline herself between the practice of meditation and work. She was looking forward to achieving her goal in life one day.

Table 4.21

The Meaning of Life and Self Value—Participant G

Category	The meaning of life
Participant G	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. self cultivation. 2. yoga meditation. 3. sharing yoga philosophy.

Note. Adapted from Summary of The Case Report of Participant G, pp. 214-215.

The seven participants in their own unique ways have found their value and worth in life. It was by the efforts of the inner work that they have put in the psychotherapeutic process, the transforming self has consciously expressed itself (Frankl, 2000). The processes of “self” possess extraordinary creativity and organization whose goal is the integration to compose the totality of the personality or psyche (Corey & Corey, 2002; Cunningham, 2011; Hall & Nordby, 1999; Jacobi, 1973; Moore, 1992; Satir, 1988; Singer, 1994). The psychotherapeutic process has served as a platform for transforming the self to express its unique spirituality in relation with the participant’s inner needs. The emergence of the spiritual self through the process of the spiritual experiences has brought enlightenment to the participants and the spiritual experiences have been imprinted in the mind of the participants for their future reference.

The findings of this research study were able to acknowledge spirituality as a means to empower the participants’ resources and personal belief system that has provided the framework for understanding the purpose and value in life. For instance: participant B would like to be a witness to her faith by becoming a nun, whereas participant G would like to impart the yoga philosophy to other people as a way for them to find their worth in life. The presence of the Divine within oneself in the form of the energy of love has instigated the self of the participants to move toward the goal of achieving human existence of becoming “who one really is” (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; Powell, 1995). The participants have found the pathway to access to their creativity to deepen the development of their own ownership which echoed the value of the spiritual or religion tradition. In Christianity: “The Kingdom of God is within.” In Siddha Yoga: “God dwells within you as you” (Vaughan, 2000, p. 40). As the participants were engaging with transpersonal spiritual phenomena, the emergence of the spiritual wisdom has increased their confidence and self esteem. This has fostered

the inner self to choose, to act and to create its own values; eventually the participants were able to gain realization of the meaning in life (DiLorenzo, 2009; Frankl, 1986; McManus, 2005; Pitchford, 2008; Van Deurzen, 2002; Yalom, 1980). These findings have also revealed that the integration of each participant's belief system and the emerging spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process were consistent and making sense (Miller, 2010; Richards & Bergin, 2007). This entailed examining the dynamics in the psychotherapy relationship. In helping the participants to create such a framework, the therapist was helping the participants to explore different perspectives of spiritual experiences, and drew upon existential questions of value and meaning in life which have led to enhancing personal transformation, healing and growth. Furthermore, the therapist was taking an approach of psychotherapy that focused on the participants' resources and the belief that they were capable of change and growth (Carney, 2007; Ongna, 1999; Puterbaugh, 2008). By creating a sense of hope for the participants, they can be empowered to experience a positive connection within the psychotherapeutic relationship that could lead to healing and transformation outside of psychotherapy.

4.3.4 The Relative Absence of Desolate Spiritual Experiences

The result of this research has shown a great consolation of spiritual advancement in the psychotherapeutic process. There was a relative absence of desolate spiritual experiences. This was probably due to the participants' lack of opportunity to express their desolate spiritual experiences, because the therapist was most of the time emphasizing the participants' resources. Nevertheless, the only one desolate spiritual experience was the dark spot that occurred when participant A was relaxing herself in trance. She was feeling fear and cold there and then, but when the healing white light

was penetrating through her body, she felt warm and relaxed (as shown in psychotherapeutic session 4, p. 102). The coldness of the dark spot was diminished eventually. A month later, the dark spot was healed and diminished miraculously when participant A was getting used to relaxation and trance (as shown in session 7, p. 108). She believed it was the divine who enhanced her courage to deal with the dark spot. The healing of the dark spot was eventually an additional spiritual consolation to the research study.

The therapist was making the effort to help participant A to deal with the dark spot, an approach of the expressive arts to externalize the dark spot was utilized several times along the psychotherapeutic process to draw upon participant A's awareness on her inner self. Eventually, the dark spot was diminished. The human mind has the abilities to transcend space and time that are inexplicable in the material world (Tart, 1997). The therapist was aligning with participant A that we both believed the higher power was present and healed participant A over time.

4.3.5 The Self Depiction of the Participants

The spiritual expressions and experiences of each participant have been different and unique throughout the psychotherapeutic process. Each participant has shared the process of self-awareness, self-reflection, self-understanding, self-acceptance, self-responsibility and self-transcendence to a certain extent. The connection and the transformation of the self have brought the evolvement of the unconscious whereby spiritual wisdom was made conscious along the journey. The engagement of spirituality to the whole being has created a vibrant momentum to each participant and it has brought forth an authentic impact to each participant respectively. Although the creative self is common to all the participants, the uncommon and unique aspects of

each individual expression were bringing out and extending the capacities of each participant's achievement. The vibrant humanity incorporated with the spiritual mind was indwelling with the life force to honor the soul (Gerber, 2009; Goleman, 2001; Vaughan, 2000). This change is reflected in the participants' self-expression.

4.3.5.1 Participant A

Participant A has depicted herself as a lighted candle (as shown in Figure 4.19). It has been transforming from a liquid substance to a solid substance. It is lighted and bringing brightness, giving warmth and light, sharing and sacrificing until everything has been accomplished.

From nothing to solid, energized and contented,
Sacrificing time, is to share, is to help the needy,
Mission accomplished, back to original stage,
A new life begins, it continues, never fade, never end...



Figure 4.19. Participant A's self depiction: A lighted candle.

4.3.5.2 Participant B

Participant B has depicted herself as a sailing ship. With the image of the sailing ship, she has stated that in her journey in life, she has gone through many ups and downs. However, it will still be a movement leading her in the direction of God.

4.3.5.3 Participant C

Participant C depicted herself as a little angel whose hand is holding a rosary (as shown in Figure 4.20). She has claimed that when she was in the psychotherapeutic process, she felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. The hand, in the image, signified the happiness in her life. She imaged herself as a little angel; mild and cute. The rosary served to remind her to pray often and relax her mind, body and soul while also spending time in solitude to listen to the word of God.



Figure 4.20. Participant C's self depiction: A little angel.

4.3.5.4 Participant D

Participant D depicted herself as a flying balloon at present and a hot air balloon in the future (as shown in Figure 4.21). As she has stated, the flying balloon is a representation of her current self; it is flying freely but it is fragile. However in the future, she will become the hot air balloon; providing expertise to others apart from herself. Participant D feels that she has progressed from the first session right up to the end, and feels pride that she has accomplished something.



Figure 4.21. Participant D's self depiction: A flying balloon.

4.3.5.5 Participant E

Participant E depicted herself in various colors with an integrating blue sea wave line.

She gave the depiction the theme of integration (as shown in Figure 4.22).

The sky blue color represents freedom.

The purple color represents wisdom.

The light purple color represents acceptance and meek.

The yellow color represents the power of God.

The red color represents a changing heart.

The orange color represents the life force, resources and energy.

The blue sea wave line represents the universal energy.



Figure 4.22. Participant E's self depiction: Integration.

4.3.5.6 Participant F

Participant F depicted herself as a white female figurine with the red heart. She has given a theme for her depiction: An ordinary lady with an ordinary wish, creates a new self (as shown in Figure 4.23).

According to Participant F, the image refers to her starting anew by letting go of the past and bettering herself. The white color represents purification, which is part of her renewal process, and the heart in the middle symbolizes the fact that her heart is still there.

She has further stated that in the process of psychotherapy she has changed psychologically; especially regarding the burden of her past. She has turned away from her egotistic tendencies to be more aware of others. She realizes that it is God, the Almighty, who provides and her faith in him will help sustain her spiritual mood.



Figure 4.23. Participant F's self depiction: A renewed ordinary lady.

4.3.5.7 Participant G

Participant G depicted herself as a blossoming Lotus flower emerging on a lake site. It is a sign of a renewed and enthusiastic life. This participant first approached the yoga philosophy and meditation as a way to simply entertain her friends; however, over time she realized that she has changed and she is getting in touch with herself and becoming mindful of who she is. Participant G claims that the psychotherapy sessions have helped her to realize that the only problem she has to face is in tackling her self-discipline.

Table 4.22

Self Depiction: Quality of Self Actualization

Participant	Self depiction
Participant A	A lighted candle.
Participant B	A sailing ship.
Participant C	A little angel.
Participant D	A flying balloon.
Participant E	Various colours with integrated meanings.
Participant F	White female figurine with a red heart.
Participant G	A blossoming lotus.

Note. Adapted from *The Description of The Self*, pp. 246-253.

All the seven participants were engaging and integrating with their spiritual self. They were embracing the quality of self-actualization. They were creating a space for themselves to indulge zealously in the area of their interests. They have been making meaning and making sense with their resources, which they have discovered throughout the process of psychotherapy. They were on their way to allowing changes in their life insofar as they are going to develop a deeper construct of spiritual values in their life.

The findings of this research study reveal that the participants were able to express the meaningfulness of owning one's resources. They were heading toward a life of meaning that will be more deeply tied to a valued sense of self and one's purpose in the larger context of life and community (Bentheim, 2005). This perspective has indicated that the participants experienced and integrated spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process, with spirituality, making meaning and making sense in connection with other people and the world at large. This has provided empirical

support for the conceptualization of finding meaning and purpose in life as both part of psychotherapy and part of spirituality (Corey & Corey, 2002; DiLorenzo, 2009; Pitchford, 2008; Satir, 1988). The findings of this study have shown the process of making meaning of life through spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process, is to help instill a sense of empowerment as well as shaping the participants' lives with purpose.

4.4 The Therapist's Spiritual Experiences

The therapist has begun her journey as the facilitator of the psychotherapy before the exact psychotherapeutic process of the research was carried out. The main concern for the therapist was her ability and her availability toward the participants. Hence, the therapist has allocated her time more in the practice of meditation and self-hypnosis to prepare herself in dealing with spiritual issues in the practice of psychotherapy. The practice was indeed relaxing to the therapist and has helped to enhance her confidence to do therapy involving spirituality.

“I could feel the anxiety within me. I was instilling good and successful therapy images onto my mind. I was practicing contemplation and meditation through the word of God as a means to calm myself and also to boost my confidence.”

(Self Reflection, 18-1-2012).

4.4.1 The Integrated Self

The therapist realized that her spiritual self and her spiritual experiences were playing a significant role in the process of psychotherapy. She was definite of her own experiences of self-integration.

"I have been through a series of spiritual experiences that shaped me to be who I am today. Whenever there was healing took place, I could recognize the power of the Divine strengthening me. I became more aware of myself. I could feel the ability of enduring pressure getting stronger within me. I was indeed stronger mentally, psychologically and emotionally."

(Self Reflection, 5-5-2012).

By connecting to the self, the therapist was able to keep a balance on the goodness of humanity (Moosmann, 2000). She was using her "self" as the reflexive instrument to think and to feel whenever she combined the knowledge and the counseling techniques into operation (Purkey & Stanley, 1996; Satir, 1988).

"I think it was Satir's theory of the self that helped me to become mindful about myself. Since the time I was exposed to Satir Systemic Family Therapy, I always look inside myself, this practice has helped me to realize the way to balance myself. Keeping balance psychologically and mentally within was a great knowledge that needs to be practiced throughout my life."

(Self Reflection, 15-8-2012).

During the psychotherapy sessions, the therapist could feel the positive energy flowing between the therapist and the participants. She was able to make meaning with the spiritual expressions of the participants. She felt tranquil throughout the psychotherapy sessions.

"I could always feel the positive energy flow in the therapy room. Probably it was due to my prayerful spirit that I was always sending positive energy across to my client before the psychotherapy session. The composed and reflexive nature within myself was actually helping me to understand the spiritual expression of my clients."

(Self Reflection, 17-5-2012).

In the meantime, participant F was touched and healed during the healing white light therapy. She was beginning to let go of her past hurtful experiences. Participant D felt that her heart was more relaxed after the parts dissociation therapy. She was coping better when facing her fear within (as shown in 4.1.4.5: Psychotherapy session five, p. 151). Participant G could feel the energy outside of her, giving her the sensation of love during the EMDR (Eye Movement Dissociation and Reprocessing) therapy (as shown in 4.1.7.2: Psychotherapy session two, p. 199); whereas participant E felt the integration of the universal energy with her life force has brought her the message to prepare herself to make changes in her life (as shown in 4.1.5.5: Psychotherapy session five, p. 166). The experience of connecting to the universal life force has helped her to realize her vocation in life. The use of the spiritual self of the therapy could create positive vibrations that help the needs of therapy.

“I believed the presence of my spiritual self was important during the psychotherapy session. Hence, I was insisting to prepare myself with meditation and self hypnosis before the psychotherapy session.”

(Self Reflection, 8-6-2012).

In the other cases, the therapist was able to resonate with some participants and their spiritual experiences. When participant A revealed about her journey of coming home to the divine, she described her life experiences as being similar to a portrait and a pizza (as shown in 4.1.1.6: Psychotherapy session six, p. 107). There were up and down experiences that made up the ingredients for self-nurturing and self-enriching. Life experiences were providing the realm for self-awareness and self-understanding for both the participant and the therapist to grow to maturity. As for participant B, her self-transformation took place when she indulged with self-reflexive exercises (as shown in 4.1.2.3: Psychotherapy session three, p. 119). This was the starting point to her self-awareness and she felt that the Holy Spirit that was indwelling within was guiding her

to take good and necessary endeavors. Participant C had a similar sense of the divine. She was sensitive with what happened within. She felt that she has the zeal to comfort the afflicted (as shown in 4.1.3.7: Psychotherapy session seven, p. 137). The therapist was indulging herself with the divine within during the psychotherapeutic process. The life force of the integrated self of the therapist was playing its role to enhance the dynamic of spiritual sensation in the psychotherapeutic process. It was encouraging a positive cycle of connecting to the self. The process of connecting to the core of oneself will bring one to self-fulfillment (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; Powell, 1995).

“The practice of connecting to my inner self through meditation and self reflection has proven its worth when I felt more in control in the therapy room. When I saw the emergence of spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process, I felt the spirituality within the self of the participant was being manifested. My clients were transformed by the power of divinity. I felt encouraged when I saw them being healed and strengthened.”

(Self Reflection, 8-9-2012).

The outcome of the research has brought consolation and joy to the therapist. The participants were in the process of self-becoming. The therapist's skill to engage with spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process has been reinforced to a mature state. The research has shown that the different parts of oneself, namely the spiritual self, the physical self, the psychological self and the emotional self need to associate and integrate with each other in order to create a wholesome self (Sperry, 2001) that will contribute to the family, to society as well as to the world.

4.4.2 The Consolation Versus the Desolation

As the therapist immersed herself in the journey of the research, she was amazed by the process and the results of psychotherapy. There were many surprises and delights. In the case of participant A, she was acknowledging the divine that was supporting her in her every day living (as shown in 4.1.1.1: Psychotherapy session one, p. 94 and 4.1.1.2: Psychotherapy session two, p. 96). Participant B realized it was not her mind that enhanced her action, but her heart (as shown in 4.1.2.4: Psychotherapy session four, p.120). Participant C was consistently hearing the chirping sound of the birds during therapy; she associated the chirping sound with the dwelling of the divine that strengthened her (as shown in 4.1.3.6: Psychotherapy session six, p.135). Participant D was awarded the momentum of firm sensation deep within her being. This has raised her resiliency to cope with her problems (as shown in 4.1.4.6: Psychotherapy session six, p. 152). Participant E revealed that it was good to step out of her comfort zone (as shown in 4.1.5.4: Psychotherapy session four, p. 162). This realization has become the turning point in the process of her soul searching toward self betterment. Participant F realized her transformation within was the divine providence to her; her heart was opened to increasing her faith (as shown in 4.1.6.11: Psychotherapy session eleven, p. 192). Participant G realized she needed self-discipline to enhance her yoga meditation in order to achieve her life goal (as shown in 4.1.7.5: Psychotherapy session five, p. 207). All the participants were gaining something very precious in their life that enhanced the process of individuation (Jung, 1959, as cited in Singer, 1994). Their spiritual selves have developed to a state whereby they could work independently to expand their resources of expertise and potential that will contribute to society at large. Their spiritual experiences have encouraged the counselor to work confidently when engaged with spiritual elements in the psychotherapeutic process.

“I was encouraged by the process throughout, where I could see the effectiveness of the psychotherapeutic techniques and tools which had illuminated me after every psychotherapy session. The healing and transformation of the participants have boosted my confidence to utilize them in a better mode in future.”

(Self Reflection, 19-10-2012).

However, there was one desolate spiritual experience whereby participant A was encountering the dark spot within her (as shown in 4.1.1.4: Psychotherapy session four, p. 102 and 4.1.1.5: Psychotherapy session five, p. 104). Although there were several explanations regarding the dark spot from the perspective of psychology, the participant chose to interpret it as the opposite force of the divine. The therapist accepted the participant’s perception; however, she feels that it most likely represents a psychological issue that needs to be addressed. The therapist tried various techniques to externalize the dark spot in order to draw a concrete conclusion to it. Despite her best efforts, the therapist felt challenged by the paradigm she had, spiritual experiences will bring positive effects. This was the blind spot of the therapist. Eventually, the participant was healed. Was it a miracle? The dark spot could not be traced. The counselor felt that participant A was probably able to befriend her shadow (Monbourquette, 2001). Nevertheless, the counselor realized that she needed to be neutral with her perception on spirituality.

“I was tensed initially when I was unable to tackle the dark spot of participant A. Despite of the circumstances, I still tried several techniques to tackle the dark spot. Externalizing the dark spot was the best technique I could do. I was thankful and relieved when the dark spot diminished.”

(Self Reflection, 9-9-2012).

4.4.3 The Affirmation

The combination of the techniques, namely the Satir model of family therapy, existential therapy, expressive arts therapy and hypnotherapy which were used in the psychotherapeutic process have affirmed the therapist that the application of these techniques was relevant and effective for enhancing the spirituality of participants. Besides, the significant level of mutuality between the therapist and the participant has also been a tool to facilitate the process of psychotherapy. Both the therapist and the participants were opened to the free flow of the psychotherapeutic process. Further, the therapist was able to capture all the spiritual experiences throughout the psychotherapy sessions. This was to connect the human self and the divine self of each and every self of the participants.

Furthermore, the emergence of spirituality during the psychotherapeutic process has brought enlightenment as it has often carried messages to lighten up the participants' lives. In the course of facilitating the psychotherapeutic process, the therapist felt touched and contented because she was able to connect her spiritual experiences with the participants in the context of their spirituality. For instance, participant A with her orientation toward the divine (as shown in 4.1.1.4: Psychotherapy session four, p. 102), participant B's self reflexive sharing to gain awareness (as shown in 4.1.2.3: Psychotherapy session three, p. 119), participant C's forgiving heart that was brought to reconciliation (as shown in 4.1.3.3: Psychotherapy session three, p. 132), participant D's sense of humor to overcome bitterness (as shown in 4.1.4.7: Psychotherapy session seven, p. 154), participant E's intuition as the divine wisdom (as shown in 4.1.5.6: Psychotherapy session six, p. 168), participant F's ego state of the power of God (as shown in 4.1.6.11: Psychotherapy session eleven, p. 192) and participant G's practice of meditation (as shown in 4.1.7.1: Psychotherapy session one,

p. 198); all the mentioned experiences were associating and connecting with the therapist's spiritual experiences. The resonance of spirituality between the therapist and the participant has created the positive dynamic cycle that further enhanced spiritual experiences. The spiritual cycle has created momentum and it has enhanced and developed the spiritual experiences qualitatively.

“As I was following the spiritual cycle from one session to another, I was certain of the effectiveness of the spiritual experiences that happened in the psychotherapy process. When I ponder over the process of psychotherapy, I felt the combination of the psychotherapy tools, for instance: hypnosis was applied interchangeably with expressive arts therapy, was very effective to enhance the spiritual elements within the self.”

(Self Reflection, 10-10-2012).

The results of the present study have given the therapist the affirmation that her psychotherapy style of focusing on the participants' resources was indeed effective. It was enhancing the participants' confidence of appreciating their whole being. Furthermore, the emergence of the spiritual experiences was consolidating the process of inner transformation. Before the participants could realize, they were on their path of changing for the better. In this study, participant D and participant E were initially having the fear that has hindered them from progressing. However, the spontaneous happenings of the spiritual experiences have strengthened the participants' inner psyche in order for them to make a move toward self-transcendence. These experiences of self-transcendence were resonating with the therapist's own experience of self-transformation.

“To obtain the outcome of searching one's vocation in life, I was almost confirmed that one needs to look within oneself. The process of self searching was difficult and painful when I looked into myself and found the ugly side of me.

Nevertheless, I was persisting on the journey, eventually there was revelation that helped me realized and gained wisdom to deal and cope with life situations and problems.”

(Self Reflection, 12-10-2012).

4.4.4 The Self Depiction of the Therapist

The therapist depicted herself as the dove that is flying high (as shown in Figure 4.24). She has been soaring with the positive life force throughout the research study.

Ever since the first appointment with the participants, the faith of the therapist was put into action for the benefit of the participants. The therapist has been using her expertise and her spiritual wisdom to incorporate the tools and techniques of psychotherapy and therapy to help the participants gain insights and dwell deeper into the core of their being. Throughout the psychotherapeutic process, the therapist was working closely with the participants; she was aware that there was a spiritual transference and counter transference taking place. By the participants' feedback, the therapist was affirmed that spirituality has indeed played its vital role in the process of psychotherapy in bringing healing and wellness. The spiritual elements have manifested in the form of energy either explicitly or implicitly, it was also expressed in the form of the chirping sounds of the birds and the visions that carried messages. Besides, the spiritual experiences were manifested internally in the form of feelings such as the feeling of warmth, calmness, peaceful, tranquility, stability, love and touched.



Figure 4.24. The therapist's self depiction: A dove that is flying high.

The therapist has been experiencing the spiritual elements as well; she was always engaging with the feeling of contentment and tranquility during the psychotherapeutic process. She was convinced that the spiritual element indeed has its function and role in the well-being of the clients or patients even if they were riddled with frustrations and problems. Hence the therapist would like to be always open to the guidance of the higher power to generate a fruitful psychotherapeutic relationship. She would indeed like to soar with the positive life force to drift onto a deeper vibrant state of spirituality in a free and prompt manner.

4.5 The Participants' and the Therapist's Shared Spiritual Experiences

The participants' and the therapist's shared spiritual experiences were revealed in the psychotherapeutic process. It was divided into three stages: the early stage, the middle stage and the final stage.

4.5.1 The Early Stage: Awakening

In the initial stage of the psychotherapeutic relationship, the counselor was able to build a good rapport with the participants. Most of the participants were experiencing spirituality as early as in the first session; such as participant A. When the therapist was prompting and facilitating participant A to focus on her problem solving, she was acknowledging the higher power as her backing support for problem solving (as shown in 4.1.1.1; Psychotherapy session one, p. 94). The first session indeed has opened the door for her to enhance her spirituality. Participant F's heart was opened during the healing white light therapy when the therapist suggested "the Father is embracing you like a child" (as shown in 4.1.6.2: Psychotherapy session two, p. 178, line 3-4).

Participant F was touched by this phrase of suggestion. The therapist was actually sending the positive energy to the participant at that moment. The therapist felt the joy when participant A and participant F expressed the outcome of the therapy. As for participant B, she was enthusiastically expressing her ideal vision in life by placing the figurines in the sand tray (as shown in 4.1.2.1: Psychotherapy session one, p. 114).

When she proceeded to the second session, she realized she ought to take God seriously and that putting the divine as her priority must be followed by her character in action.

The therapist was concerned about her vision in life that can be put into action in a real life situation. In the case of participant C, she has brought up the subject matter of her

faith that has impacted her (as shown in 4.1.3.2: Psychotherapy session two, p. 130). She was amazed to hear the chirping sound of the birds during the healing white light therapy (as shown in 4.1.3.1: Psychotherapy session one, p. 129 and 4.1.3.3: Psychotherapy session three, p. 132). The therapist was wondering where the manifestation of nature in the form of birds chirping would lead in the beginning of the journey of psychotherapy.

Meanwhile, participant D was recognizing and acknowledging the positive and negative parts within her (as shown in 4.1.4.2: Psychotherapy session two, p. 143). She began to realize that the practice of mindfulness was a given that led her to cope with her negative emotions; especially the feelings of fear and insecurity. On another occasion, participant E was getting in touch with the flow of her inner energy. She could feel the fear within and she was finding a way to deal with the fear that obstructed her from moving forward in her life (as shown in 4.1.5.3: Psychotherapy session three, p. 161). The therapist was resonating with participant D and participant E on mindfulness as a resource to cope with the flow of negativity within and to find the gist of living in the present (Barr, 2011; Loh, 2008; Gerber, 2009; Goleman, 2001). On another occasion, participant G felt she was embraced by a loving and warm energy on her left hand side during the EMDR (Eye Movement Dissociation and Reprocessing) therapy (Shapiro, 2001). It was coincidence that during that moment the therapist sensed participant G needed a mother's love very much (as shown in 4.1.7.2: Psychotherapy session two, p. 199).

The shared spiritual experiences were unexpected and both the participant and the therapist were amazed by the spiritual intervention. We were awakened by the spiritual elements that were functioning magnificently. We shared the joy of consolation. We were wondering and looking forward to further spiritual manifestation in the coming sessions.

4.5.2 The Middle Stage: Resiliency

The spiritual experience is something potent and intangible (Carney, 2007; Kelly, 2005). It was beyond words. There were insights gained when one experienced a spiritual quest. When participant A was expressing her journey of coming home to the divine, she described it as the ascending and descending process of a travelling train. Her friends would change when she travelled from one destination to another destination (as shown in 4.1.1.4: Psychotherapy session four, p. 102). Up to date, she has not got a permanent group of friends. The therapist could resonate with participant A because the therapist also encountered a similar situation when she was on her journey returning home to the divine (Vaughan, 2000). The journey to the divine could be frustrating when we felt lonely at times without people supporting us. Anyway, we still carry on with the journey because we desired the peace and the consolation from the higher power. We have shared the same faith of hope. Meanwhile, we were resilient to take life easy. In the case of participant D, she was rewarded with the sense of stability at the core of her being although she was in the midst of resolving her deep fear and insecurity (as shown in 4.1.4.6: Psychotherapy session six, p. 152). The therapist too shared her own experience of the sense of gravity within the core of her being. Both the participant and therapist have agreed their moods were more stable when the sense of gravity was within them.

In the case of participant B, she has her vision to become a spiritual grown person. There was no doubt that she was moving toward her ideal self. However, she was aware that she needed to work on the relationship with her sister (as shown in 4.1.2.1: Psychotherapy session one, p. 114). She was trying to keep a balance between her dream and reality; being mindful of her spiritual quest and the reality in life was something common that the therapist could share with her. Whereby, in the case of

participant C, the process of reconciliation with others has increased her positive energy (as shown in 4.1.3.6: Psychotherapy session six, p. 135). In addition when she heard the chirping sound in the psychotherapeutic process, she felt comfort, tranquility and relaxed. On top of that, her faith upon herself and her spirituality became stronger. The therapist was often feeling spiritual energy whenever therapy took place and she was able to acknowledge the spirit of tranquility emerging as a result of reconciliation. Besides, the therapist believed that the pure hearted participant C will be blessed by the higher power whenever she is in need.

Participant E was able to connect and dwell with her inner self. The process of integration has reconnected and reinforced her life force in a way that released the wisdom that hinted her to make changes in her life. She has gained the insights to follow the prompting of her intuition because this was the part that was connecting to her wisdom. She felt the sense of welcoming in making changes (as shown in 4.1.5.6: Psychotherapy session six, p. 168). As she was connected with the innate capacity of faith, she felt that she had more space for resiliency to deal with the challenges in life. Though she could feel the burden of changes, she was comfortable in handling it. The therapist's eyes were opened when she was engaging with the participant's life force. There was the feeling of "ah ha" when the connection of the life force occurred. It was wonderful and amazing.

Participant F has dissolved from her past hurting experiences throughout the psychotherapeutic process (as shown in 4.1.6.2: Psychotherapy session two, p. 177 and 4.1.6.3: Psychotherapy session three, p. 178). She was uplifted with the positive energy since then. She has gained strength to pursue her life with much enthusiasm. She was more mindful with her mood changes and she has more resilience in handling life situations. She realized that the higher power has strengthened her mind, soul and body. The locus of control has been shifted from fulfilling her somatic desire to spiritual and

psychological needs. The therapist was able to connect with participant F because she has gone through the similar process of transformation, which involved paradigm shifting and inner renewal. As for participant G, she has gained the mood of resiliency when she was able to understand the message that was carried by the change of colors in her chakra energy. The realization of this inner energy flow was giving her the impact of transformation (as shown in 4.1.7.5; Psychotherapy session five, p. 208). Upon this realization, she firmly set her heart to take control over her self-discipline in order to pursue her aim in life. The therapist was amazed with the outcome of the participant's realization. The therapist also learned from this momentum of inner energy and how the inner energy flows could help a person to gain inner transcendence. The spirituality of participant G has helped her to gain wisdom and tranquility to cope with life situations. It was the wisdom and tranquility that the therapist could resonate with participant G to deal with life situations. The locus of control was shifted internally. There were more resilient in dealing with the people around and the environment.

In conclusion, the spiritual experiences of all the participants have created the momentum of spirituality in oneself that was not only enhancing resiliency, but also producing endurance and love. The spiritual experiences have created the room and space for the participants to gain new insights, which were helping them to transcend on different levels according to each individual's need. It was the process of connection to the self in which the inner life force began to grow and blossom in its essence (Machinga & Friedman, 2013; Satir, 1988; Thompson, 1982). The participants felt more confident and they have gained the zeal to move on with their goals in life. On the other hand, because of the spiritual resonations with the participants, the therapist was gaining a greater faith to connect with her inner energy when engaging with clients in her psychotherapeutic practice. Furthermore, the therapist was gaining the insights of

openness to connect with client's life force in order to enhance momentum on spirituality during psychotherapy.

4.5.3 The Final Stage: Wholesomeness

The outcome of the psychotherapeutic process was all good. All seven participants have found their direction in life. This was similar to the therapist as well. Each participant has encountered the spiritual experiences throughout the psychotherapeutic process. The therapist was using the self of her to connect with the participants. The participants were expressing their spiritual experiences either explicitly or implicitly. The spiritual dimension was carried forward in a cyclical manner between the participant and the therapist. In the case of participant E, when she was integrated with her inner energy and the universal life force, she had more faith and confidence in her intuition (as shown in 4.1.5.5: Psychotherapy session five, p. 166), and the therapist affirmed participant E with her own experience of intuition and visions. The acknowledgement somehow reinforced the participant's self-confidence (as shown in 4.1.5.7: Psychotherapy session seven, p. 170). As for participant B, she was confident to pursue her dream as a nun (as shown in 4.1.2.7: Psychotherapy session seven, p. 126). The therapist shared the sense of mission with participant B, although the therapist's dream was to become an authentic layperson. Both were encouraging each other from the heart to serve the Lord according to one's mission.

Participant A and participant C were planning to give more time on service to others. Participant A was enthusiastic to the extent to do charitable service in the rural area (as shown in 4.1.1.2: Psychotherapy session two, p. 96), whereas participant C was keen to share her "breaking through" experiences with the afflicted despite her health condition (as shown in 4.1.3.7: Psychotherapy session seven, p. 137). As for participant

D and participant G, they were liberated and they were cultivating their expertise at present in their own settings to be skillful in order to utilize their potential and resources to help others in future. Participant D will engage in a social and humanity context (as shown in 4.1.4.8: Case report summary, p. 156) whereas participant G will involve herself in spreading the yoga philosophy in the social and relationship context (as shown in 4.1.7.4: Psychotherapy session four, p. 203); whereas participant F would like to carry on with her ordinary life as a renewed person. She was looking inwardly to see whether she could utilize her expertise to do some charitable work in the future (as shown in 4.1.6.12: Case report summary, p. 197). The participants have found their direction in life. The therapist too has found inspiring spiritual insights in the psychotherapy practice. She will pursue her expertise in this area in her psychotherapeutic practice. Both the participants and the therapist have confirmed the context in life that was going to be self-fulfilling.

The participants and the therapist were wholesome in their own context of life. The spiritual experiences will imprint in the heart and in the mind; it is potent whenever and wherever it is needed. Each of us has found our own interpretation of spirituality in relation with the transformation and the integration within the self. There was the life force that helps to move forward to self-actualization. The individual spirituality will become a tool to cope with life challenges and to enhance personal growth as well.

“I have gained an insight: Spiritual experiences are related to the inner self.

These experiences can provide momentum and strength to transcend the self.

This was the moment of illumination and tacit knowledge of this research study

(Moustakas, 1990).

(Self Reflection, 25-10-2012)

4.6 The Concept of Wholesomeness for the Research Study

The concept of wholesomeness was the result of heuristic process. The process of immersing, pondering, reflecting, and reviewing was corresponding with the phases of heuristic inquiry. Specifically the phases of illumination and explication that took place simultaneously were inspiring and leading the therapist to tacit knowledge. As Moustakas (1990) has pointed out:

“I am reaching into deeper and deeper regions of a human problem or experience and coming to know and understand its underlying dynamics and constituents more and more fully” (p. 13).

The concept of wholesomeness has begun in the therapist’s perception of human being when she was encountering the divine Lord Jesus Christ twelve years ago. The divinity and the humanity of Jesus Christ were inspiring the counselor to explore her own divinity and humanity. The therapist was thrilled by the fact that she has gone through the process of self-transcendence from one state to another to achieve self-actualization, which was explicated by Abraham Maslow (Corey & Corey, 2002). For this reason, the therapist was using her experience of the renewed “self” in the entire journey of psychotherapy with each participant. The dynamic of the psychotherapy relationship with each participant has established the reciprocal result of holism.

When the therapist was writing chapter four of the present study, she was subsequently pondering upon the Satir iceberg metaphor (Satir, Banmen, Gerber, & Gomori, 2006), the inter-relationship of the five dimensions by Len Sperry (Sperry, 2001) and the process of Jungian individuation within the self of the individual (Singer, 1994; Yang, 2009); she was gradually gaining insights into the connection between humanity and spirituality. Eventually she was illuminated by the interacting relationship between the humanity and the spirituality in the human person. Hence, the

interacting relationship of the two dimensions has become real and alive. Therein, the therapist has gained a valuable insight that was relational to the concept of wholeness for each participant in this research study.

The concept of wholeness is an integrating interaction between the spiritual self and the human self, which is connected to the mind of each participant (as shown in Figure 4.25). It is a developmental equilibrium process between the spiritual self and the human self toward congruency. The humanity and the spirituality within a person will develop reciprocal impact, interacting and integrating with one another within the context of the participant's life until the entire interacting relationship arrives at its equilibrium.

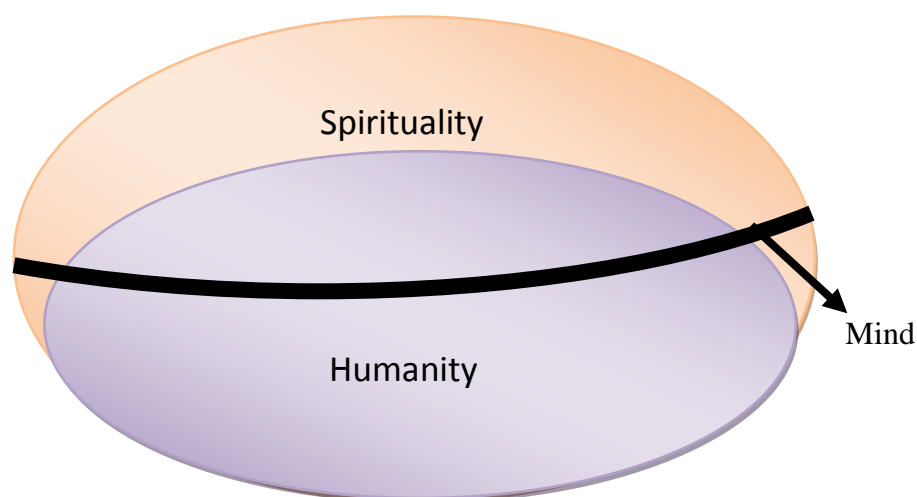


Figure 4.25. The concept of wholeness for the research study.

It is the human self that initiates the process of equilibrium. When the mind is sparked by the infusion of spiritual experiences, the human self will be empowered gradually; there will be a breakthrough and inner nourishment. As the cycle of empowerment and healing progressed, the integration of the human self and the spiritual self is strengthened. The process of self-integration will come to a state where

equilibrium is obtained (Kavar, 2012). When the whole being is at the state of equilibrium or congruency, the being is in the state of wholesomeness (Rogers, 1995). When each participant has arrived at the state of equilibrium, the “self” of each participant is enlightened. The ratio for the divinity and the humanity to reach equilibrium varies from one participant to another. Each participant may need different durations of time in becoming a wholesome being. The significant expression for the wholesome being (during the duration of the psychotherapy journey) will be the self-depiction of each participant in this research study.

“The journey of equilibrium is a process of discovery that is continuous, the more I discover of myself, the more I am creating, and the more there is to discover. Life is movement. The spiritual and the psyche realm are continuous renewing. It is a journey of revelation, never ending, until we reach the state of death.”

(Self Reflection, 25-12-2012).

4.7 The Collective Depiction of the Participants and the Therapist

The journey of the psychotherapeutic process, which involved spiritual experiences, has fostered the emotional, psychological and spiritual growth of the participants and the therapist. The growth of various aspects of the participants has enhanced the momentum of the participants’ whole being to set goals in their lives. The psychotherapeutic process has indeed served as a bridge for the participants to cross over toward their own unique path to the direction of their goals. On the other hand, the therapist was also experiencing her personal renewal and growth in the practice of psychotherapy. The psychotherapeutic process and relationship have strengthened her

confidence in handling spiritual issues. It was an affirmation to the therapist that she has the ability to deal with the spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic practice.

From the perspective of growing enlightenment, the researcher would like to depict the spiritual journey of the psychotherapeutic relationship in a poem and a drawing (as shown in Figure 4.26).

Genuine is the I-Thou relationship,
Like a boat on the deep blue sea,
Days and nights it sails,
Accompanies by the changing mood of the environment,
Singing and making melody in the heart,
Until we see the horizon and the rainbow,
Father sun is glittering,
Mother moon is responding,
The ego and the shadow are befriending deep deep down,
In the core of our being,
Integrating and renewing the self,
Serene and alive in the process of self becoming,
Connecting with the universal life force,
Hand in hand we build the world of love (Wong, 2013).



Figure 4.26. The collective depiction of the psychotherapy journey.

4.8 Conclusion

The sense of spirituality which was embedded within the self of the participants was able to be expressed when the participants possessed the ability to draw their spirituality respectively from their internal frame of reference (Hiles, 2001; Moustakas, 1990). They were able to endure their weaknesses and psychological disturbances. They were transformed internally when they were strengthened by their dynamic life force. Eventually, they were experiencing inner freedom and inner peace. The participants' spiritual experiences were either implicitly or explicitly being depicted with their individual unique expressions. In the present study, participant A has experienced the divine presence in the form of a warmth sensation flowing through her entire body. She is on her way home to the divine. Participant B realized her life will be meaningful when she bears witness as a peacemaker. As for participant C, she was associating the chirping sound of the birds as the divine that strengthened her. Participant D felt the momentum of stability that raised her resiliency toward the problems she was facing. In the case of participant E, she was connecting her inner energy with the universal life force that enhanced her determination to make changes in her life. Participant F was encountering a breakthrough in her life that changed her paradigm and she will remain a renewed ordinary lady. As for participant G, she has decided to work on her self-discipline after connecting with her chakra energy. All the participants were able to enhance their personal spiritual journey toward tacit knowing. They were experiencing the four stages of the spiritual psychotherapeutic progress (as shown in Chapter Three, Figure 3.3). They have indeed progressed and realized they are the authors of their own life (Frankl, 1986).

The entire psychotherapeutic process was the developmental equilibrium process between humanity and divinity. It was the humanity that started to bring the divine

within to light. When the participants were able to connect with their inner selves, they began to relate the spiritual experiences to human values, which were characterized by creativity, faith, love, compassion, selflessness, wisdom and the feelings of connectedness with the universal life force (Kasprow & Scotton, 1999). As the spiritual self is being reinforced, the human self is opened to the cycle of breaking through and inner empowerment. This was the process of incubation and illumination, which continued until the spiritual self and the human self have reached its equilibrium. Insofar, they have found their vocation and direction in life (DiLorenzo, 2009).

On the other hand, the therapist was able to engage and immerse with the phenomenon of spirituality in this research study. She was able to explore, feel, touch and connect with the nature of the subject matter in the psychotherapeutic process. The therapist's spirituality was creating the firm foundation to hold and endure the participants' pains and uncertainties in the course of transformation and self-becoming. The therapist's spirituality has served as a resource and inspiration in the psychotherapeutic relationship. As her spiritual self was connecting with the self of the participants, she was indeed making meaning in the use of the internal pathway of the "self" that led to spiritual wisdom and psychotherapeutic wisdom (Hiles, 2001). The therapist even gained an insight that was relational to the concept of wholesomeness for the research study. The state of creativity of this wisdom was affirmed when it moved the spiritual experiences of the psychotherapeutic environment onto a deeper vibrant state of positive life force (Satir, 1988). In conclusion, the therapist's spirituality has created the platform for spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process and it has enhanced the spiritual experiences when the participants were able to respond, explore, dwell, immerse and make sense of the spiritual phenomena in terms of developing meanings for their own growth (Lewis, 2011).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how spiritual experiences have connected to the self of the participants and influenced them in the psychotherapeutic process. The process of psychotherapy has shown that spirituality is an essential source of strength and support to the participants. It has assisted them in exploring and understanding their own sense of being in this research study.

Spirituality has functioned in a number of different ways during the psychotherapeutic process. Spirituality was transcendent when the participants were opened to experiencing something more than tangibly present in the psychotherapeutic process. Spirituality is imminent when the participants are able to connect their past and lived experiences. The atmosphere of respecting the spiritual and religious beliefs of the participants has actually opened the way to greater meaning, support and even healing. Spirituality was the momentum and inner grace when the participants were able to create, discover meaning, purpose and value in their life that kept them moving to develop a better life. They were embracing the notion of “I am the owner of my life and I am responsible for my being”.

This research study was also revealing the exploration and the interpretation of the spiritual experiences, which was using the self of the therapist. It was a research process that echoed Clark Moustakas’s basic philosophy that described, “...in every learner, in every person, there are creative sources of energy and meaning that are often

tacit, hidden, or denied” (Moustakas, 2001). The process of psychotherapy has shown the heuristic inquiry within the context of the researcher’s own lived experience. The conviction of the therapist to connect with the life force, namely the “self” was enforcing the dynamic resource for changes in psychotherapy. It was contributing to the interconnectedness with the participants during psychotherapy, whereby the participants have gained faith and support to allow their own sense of spirituality to empower them in the transformative processes in the research enterprise.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The expressions of various spiritualities could be described in theistic and non-theistic perspective. In this research, some participants who were with the sense of theism were often associating spiritual experiences with the higher power. The spiritual experiences can be described as the human desire for relationship with a transcendent power are supported in literature (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999). It was the higher power that was present in the psychotherapeutic process and words could not capture the entire meaning of transcendence. In the present study, some participants acknowledged the divine presence in the form of birds chirping, the movement of the life force, the feeling of warmth and the presence of the bright light. It was manifested especially in the healing white light therapy.

On some occasions, the participants described their spiritual experiences as something extraordinary happening inside of them. The spiritual experiences are not limited to involvement with the divine but it also includes transpersonal experiences, such as intuition, the out of space sensation, the inner mood of stability at the center of the being, the visions that carried messages and the movement of energy. It also involved other qualities such as faith, love, interconnectedness and non-attachment.

In this research study, all the participants have acknowledged spirituality as something higher than the human self. The experiences of spirituality have served as a resource for the participants' self care system. The spiritual experiences have strengthened the participants' tolerance and coping with their negative emotions and thoughts. The ability to endure negativity has brought the participants to capture some of their weaknesses. This has the effect of allowing the participants to experience inner freedom and inner peace. The experiences have enhanced the dynamic of the life force to form its equilibrium within. The participants have now gained more strength and support to take up the responsibilities to improve their lives.

The participants in this research have experienced spirituality in their unique way as a medium to connect with the self. It has involved the resolution in dealing with the shadow, the repressed characteristic of the conscious mind. When the unconscious becomes conscious, there will be a breakthrough in life. Some participants were able to break through the repressive barrier; such as participants A and F. They were able to bring balance between the shadow and the ego, the conscious mind. When they have experienced the breaking through process, the parts that were afflicted turned out to be the resources for healing and growth. This has generated more life force being released into the body and they were able to reach out to more parts of themselves. Eventually, they were able to find their direction and happiness in life.

As the process of transformation and self-integration took place in the psychotherapeutic process, the participants began to find their vocation in life. The vocation is an answer to the existential needs. Some participants even embraced the vision in life which consists of the perspective of Virginia Satir on the phenomenon of "us-ness" such as participant B and G, the "essential we" that implied a meta-discourse which involved the relationship of people, nature, religion and spirituality. Such findings of this research have supported the literature of Bentheim (2005). Thus, this

has the effect of fulfilling the psychotherapeutic goal of discovering the meaning in the participant's life.

The spiritual experiences in this research were all playing a positive role in the participants' lives. The participants have opened their hearts and took the courage to look inside their selves. Their spiritual experiences whether explicitly or implicitly expressed were improved qualitatively. This is relational to the participants' experiences of psychological as well as spiritual growth. The results of the research have shown that the participants were well connected and integrated with the self. Participants were able to express themselves with a self-portrait. The self was symbolized in the form of a lighted candle, a sailing ship, a little angel, a flying balloon, the integrated colors, a renewed ordinary lady and a blossoming lotus. Each symbol has symbolized an alchemical image that has gone through the process of becoming aware of oneself, of one's make-up and they were on their way to discovering their inner true self; it is supported by literature (Gomori & Adaskin, 2009). The psychotherapeutic process was indeed a platform for the participants to move on the path to individuation.

The research study has described the transpersonal spiritual phenomena of the human experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. The inquiry of transpersonal spirituality which connected the researcher / therapist with the subject matter has enhanced the researcher's exploration and examination of her own spirituality to tacit knowledge, as she revealed in her self-reflection: "I have gained an insight: spiritual experiences are related to the inner self. These experiences can provide momentum and strength to transcend the self". During the period when the inquiry of transpersonal spirituality was expanded, the researcher was able to construct the concept of wholeness – It is an interacting process between the human self and the spiritual self toward congruency. The researcher / therapist and the participants were indeed journeying together on the path toward wholeness.

5.3 Significance and Contribution of the Study

Since the counseling literature that shows spirituality as a process variable is limited (Cashwell et al., 2001), the present study has contributed to the psychotherapy and counseling literature by filling the gap of the less explored domain pertaining to transpersonal spirituality as a process component in counseling and therapy. The presentation of the data on spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process has shown a salient fact that spirituality as a process component is an important aspect that plays the role of promoting the wellbeing of the participants. The findings of the study have also highlighted the in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of the therapist / researcher. By using in-depth qualitative methodology such as heuristic inquiry, the research findings have made the contribution on how transpersonal spiritual phenomena of human experience is described and connected in the psychotherapeutic process. Both psychotherapy integration and heuristic inquiry can only be conducted on an individual and personal basis, and that it is the quality of the relationship, with the client, or the research material, that produces results.

Findings of this study have presented an in-depth psychological research on transpersonal spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process by using the heuristic inquiry approach. Heuristic inquiry on spirituality in this research study has revealed how an extraordinary human experience can be researched more closely in a systematic way. The therapist / researcher's spiritual beliefs and values have provided the strength and support to enhance the progress of innate spirituality in the participants. The attention given to the participants by focusing on their inner process was actually conveying a sense of certainty to the participants' spirituality that makes sense of living. This has encouraged spiritual awakening among the participants. The study has indeed acknowledged that it was impossible to be value free during the psychotherapeutic

process. Psychotherapy and counseling is indeed a value laden process (Lonborg & Bowen, 2004; Richards & Bergin, 2007). This is supported by the fact that the counselor or therapist was resonating with participant B regarding the sense of mission to serve the Lord (as discussed on p. 270, 4.5.3 line 13-16). Thereby, the therapists or counselors who are interested in integrating spirituality into the counseling and psychotherapeutic process will need to train themselves in transpersonal theory, ascertain their own beliefs and values, apart from being prayerful and mindful when attending and connecting with the clients. Findings of this research study have opened a platform to enrich the understanding of the impact of authentic spirituality. It is also beneficial for professional counselor and therapist training (as discussed on p. 281, 5.5.: Implications on counseling practice and recommendations).

The outcome of the study has revealed the process of healing, transformation and integration of the self. It has proven that spirituality is a transformative component to achieve recovery of the self. When the counseling practitioner and therapist are able to address the spirituality of the client, it could enhance an in-depth discovery of the self of a person which further gauged the direction or the vocation in a person's life. Hence, this study can serve as a foundation to those interested in doing spiritual counseling and therapy.

The results of the present study have provided precious information to the mental health professionals by the fact of using humanistic approaches such as the Jungian based expressive arts therapy, the Satir systemic family therapy, existential therapy and hypnotherapy can serve as the effective agents that best help the clients to achieve psychotherapeutic and counseling goals (Satir, 1988; Yalom, 1980; Yapko, 2011). Specifically, by using hypnotherapy as a pathway, the therapist was able to facilitate participants in exploring the unknowable which has inspired participants to realize meaning in life. Besides, non-verbal (visual) therapy such as expressive arts

therapy in the form of creative visualization and active imagination works well as an instigator in enhancing participants' awareness. It is hoped that the research study will serve as a basis for further longitudinal research on counseling and psychotherapy approaches that could enhance spirituality.

As the literature related to spiritual in this country mostly reported spiritual impact upon clients in the pastoral counseling which involved direct religious intervention (Khalid, 2008; Othman et al., 2011), the findings of this study have shown a significant truth that spiritual experiences could emerge in the conventional counseling setting. It has demonstrated the effectiveness of spiritually integrated counseling approaches that were being used. Perhaps the post-modern counseling approaches such as narrative therapy, expressive arts therapy, sand play therapy among others are suitable for enhancing spirituality in counseling and psychotherapy. This research has probably provided some important clues for further exploration in the practice of counseling and psychotherapy approaches to connect with the spiritual self. Since not many such studies have been done in Malaysia, this research study can serve as a springboard for future research on spiritual counseling and psychotherapy.

Looking at the evolvement and the findings of spirituality in various aspects in psychology, psychotherapy and counseling, the researcher feels that the trend of spirituality being used in psychotherapy and counseling will be common in years to come. Therefore, she is confident that her research involving spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process will somehow contribute its findings to the practice of counseling and psychotherapy.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations in this research study need to be addressed, however.

First, the small sample size that involved seven participants in the research study may not represent the larger number of individuals who are seeking professional help in the counseling and therapeutic practice. Most of the participants were Chinese ladies coming from a Christian background; thus, the participants do not represent various ethnic and religious groups residing in Malaysia. In the actual situation, the researcher was having a difficult time looking for any Muslim client / participant because propagation of non-Muslim religions to Muslims is prohibited in Malaysia (Khan, 2010); hence Muslim clients will probably not agree to involvement in research related to spiritual counseling by a non-Muslim. Furthermore, only a few people could commit themselves to complete the entire psychotherapy project which was a time-consuming process. Due to such circumstances, the researcher could not explore spirituality to the fullest in terms of the Malaysian context.

Second, this research study involved massive data. Discussion with the supervisor and the external co-supervisor may not be enough to cover the accuracy of the spiritual categories being verified. Moreover, because of the nature of the sensitivity of the data, a substantive peer review, as well as a thorough participant checking, could not be done to validate the entire data and findings. There were only a minimum of three members / participants checking the researcher's interpretation of the emerging characteristics in order to minimize this limitation. Furthermore, the synthesis of the meaning and the essence of spiritual experiences are extremely dependent on the researcher's interpretation. Hence, subjective biases of the researcher are unavoidable in this research study.

5.5 Implications for Counseling and Psychotherapy Practice and Recommendations

The following section discusses the implications derived from the study.

5.5.1 Transpersonal Spirituality

The findings of this research study have revealed that spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process has been the spiritual journey for the participants as well as the therapist. The transpersonal process in psychotherapy is one which most probably allows the client and therapist alike to transcend earthly ego existence and explore the soul of one's being. This transcendence also appears to provide for a spiritual connection which serves as the threshold for deep self- discovery and transformation. This experience along with the discussion on the heuristic study has challenged the researcher to utilize her creativity and her nature of reflexivity to gain deeper comprehension in interpreting the meaning of human experience in the psychotherapeutic process. This in turn provides a means for the researcher to engage and to understand the transpersonal spirituality in depth. Transpersonal spirituality appears to be deepened through the development of the client's psychological process. This can be done by using the techniques of hypnotic suggestion, creative visualization, active imagination, meditation and dream work to draw upon inner greater energy for the understanding of the transpersonal self.

5.5.2 The Secular Counseling Approaches which Relates to Spirituality

In the present study, the therapist was using humanistic based approaches that provide the opportunity for clients to connect with their own spirituality. Thereby, it would most probably be beneficial for the therapist to undergo the spiritual integrated education curricula. The question of how to effectively and appropriately incorporate spirituality into counselor education programs needs to be considered. Spiritual strategies such as the practice of humanistic based mindfulness and some post-modern secular counseling approaches such as narrative therapy and expressive arts therapy that might draw spiritual ideas in counseling could be integrated into the curriculum. Hence, some efforts and research needs to be carried out to determine the spiritually integrated education curricula for Malaysian counseling education.

5.5.3 The Counseling Practice

This research study has further shown that the therapist was emphasizing the participants' resources and strengths throughout their journey of self-exploration, self-understanding and self-betterment. It would be good for counselors to acknowledge and recognize the client's belief system irrespective of religious, ethical and cultural values as the strength that will support clients to believe they are capable of growth and change. It is also important for the counselors and therapists to examine their own personal social background, in order to be cautious of some prejudices, biases and stereotypes in their counseling practice.

Further on, an effective interpersonal relationship between the counselor or therapist and the client will help counselors or therapists to gain valuable insights from the spiritual experiences in the counseling and psychotherapeutic process. Besides, this

interaction appears to be providing a pathway for the clients to access to their creativity to deepen the development of their human existence. Hence, it will be a growth fostering process for both counselor and client. This has the effect of helping the counselors to build up their ability in handling spiritual issues in their professional practice.

The research study has revealed that the therapist was helping her clients in their journey toward the process of individuation. The therapist was using her “self” and the higher self as an instrument to foster the psychotherapeutic relationship. The conviction of the therapist during therapy was building up the trust and connection between the two persons in the psychotherapeutic relationship. The positive establishment has gradually increased the participant’s self-acceptance, self-understanding and self-responsibility. Counselors or therapists who are well prepared to use their own life force would most probably foster a strong atmosphere and dynamic for change in counseling and therapy.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

This research study utilized qualitative heuristic research methodology to explore clients’ experiences of spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process. The present research was conducted with a group of female participants with the results showing that spirituality is an important element that enhances positive changes in a client’s life throughout the process of psychotherapy. It will be interesting to include male participants in the psychotherapeutic setting for future research. It would also be good to research upon different age groups on the subject matter. In fact, the researcher would like to encourage further research on spirituality as a process component in counseling or psychotherapy to verify spirituality as an essential counseling tool for healing and wellness. Furthermore, spirituality as an integral process component can be

further developed as scientific quantifiable “facts” for counseling and therapy. This research study, which was done to explore in-depth spirituality, can serve as an encouragement for future spiritual research in the counseling and psychotherapeutic process.

As this research study was focusing on clients’ spiritual experiences, it is also necessary to do research on the counselors’ or therapists’ spiritual experiences in the counseling and psychotherapeutic process. Carney (2007) in her empirical findings in counseling has done a study on women therapists’ experiences of spirituality in the counseling process. The results of the study have provided evidence that spirituality is the resource for growth and change. The level and the expression of spiritual experiences may differ; hence a study on counselors or therapists in a longitudinal based research may be interesting as counselors or therapists’ spiritual experiences in the counseling and psychotherapeutic process may change over time. Furthermore, researchers can also explore the connection between spirituality and the existential needs of the counselor and therapists.

This research study has employed mixed psychotherapy approaches with a humanistic orientation. The results of this research study have shown positive effects that the approaches are able to provide a more conducive atmosphere for expression of the spiritual element. Baranovich (2009) in her empirical study in counseling has utilized the Jungian based expressive arts therapy to help her clients in the process of individuation. The outcome of the spiritual experiences has illuminated that the humanistic approach is effective in revealing spirituality of the clients. Future research may want to consider specific humanistic approaches with clients on various non-clinical presenting issues. By using the specific humanistic approach, it may be valuable to further explore spiritual intervention on specific clinical presenting problems in the counseling and psychotherapeutic process.

The participants in this research study have expressed the spiritual experiences in the theistic and non-theistic perspectives. The spiritual experiences in theistic and non-theistic perspectives were significantly different in their expressions and interpretations in the multicultural research. It would be interesting to compare the similarities and the differences in the spiritual expressions and interpretations either with a group of clients or the mental health professionals from various cultural backgrounds in the counseling or psychotherapy setting. The research may become an in-depth study when the researcher explores the spirituality with two groups of samples that are from theistic and non-theistic affiliation.

As an extension of this present study, the researcher would like to suggest further research done on the selected samples that are representing the different ethnic groups in Malaysia. It will be interesting to explore spiritual experiences of clients with different cultural background and religious affiliation. The findings may be more representative of the Malaysian population. Although the size of the sample is small and does not represent the large number of people coming for counseling or therapy, the in-depth findings nevertheless have shown that research on exploring various spiritual experiences in the counseling or psychotherapeutic process is best manifested through in-depth qualitative research such as heuristic inquiry methodology. The description of the entire manifested spiritual experiences was impossible to find in quantitative research. Looking at the final product of the present study, it would be good that a qualitative evaluation tool such as NVIVO be used to justify the validity of the data.

5.7 Conclusion

The research study has illuminated the significant role and contribution of spiritual experiences in the psychotherapeutic process. It has shown the in-depth understanding

of the “self” when the clients were well connected with their humanity and their spirituality. The spiritual experiences are expressed in theistic and non-theistic dimensions. The spiritual expressions in the theistic perspective are described with profound divine intervention, unlike the spiritual expressions in the non-theistic perspective involving the inner energy and the universal energy. This research also involved humanism with the concept of self-actualization and individuation. Both spiritual expressions have signified the momentum of self-transformation and self-integration to a certain extent whereby clients were able to realize their self-value and determine their direction in life.

This research study has made possible in-depth understanding of the individual’s spirituality by utilizing the heuristic inquiry research methodology. The application of the reflexive process has drawn the connection of internal frame of reference that opened the door to tacit knowledge and intuition. The breaking through process has served as the platform for the spiritual self to engage with its own unique expression in the form of various genuine self-depictions; this is to reveal that counseling and psychotherapy have the ability to enhance personal spirituality with various levels of spiritual depth.

The results of the present study have signified an era of development to confirm spirituality can be the healing tool for some clients who seek help. Moreover, counselors or therapists who are able to incorporate traditional and non-traditional approaches to address spirituality may help the clients to utilize their spirituality in their day to day living when spiritual practice is necessary. The researcher hopes that the findings of this research study will serve as the enhancer to reinforce the mental health professionals to equip themselves to address spiritual issues in their professional practice.

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Appendix A

University of Malaya
Faculty of Education
Head of Department of Education Psychology and Counseling

Re: Appointment of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daina-Lea Baranovich as supervisor to Wong Ching Ching (Matric No. PHA090017) doctoral degree in counseling, research dissertation.

Research dissertation title: A heuristic study of clients' spiritual experiences in the counseling process.

With reference to the above-mentioned matter, Assoc. Professor Dr. Diana-Lea Baranovich, A Senior Lecturer at University of Malaya, Department of Education Psychology and Counseling has been appointed as the Doctoral Degree in Counseling Dissertation supervisor to the above mentioned student. I, Dr. Shahrir Jamaluddin, am of the professional and ethical opinion that Assoc. Professor Dr. Diana-Lea Baranovich is the most qualified faculty member to supervise this research dissertation. This approval has been given in a letter by University Malaya dated 12 October, 2009 (Reference No: UM.P/PTD(IT) 644/1.

Thank you

Regards

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Research Supervisor
University of Malaya
Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling

Sir,

Supervision for Wong Ching Ching, doctoral degree in counseling dissertation entitled: **A heuristic study of clients' spiritual experiences in the counseling process.**

With reference to the above-mentioned matter, I Assoc. Professor Dr. Diana-Lea Baranovich hereby confirm that I am the Senior Lecturer appointed as Doctoral Degree in Counseling Research Dissertation supervisor for Wong Ching Ching (Matric No. PHA090017). The title of the research dissertation is as stated above.

I will be responsible for overseeing the quality of this research and monitoring the information collected from your organization for purposes of this research. If any unforeseen circumstances in which Wong Ching Ching will not be able to finish conducting the sessions for the research, I will take over as supervisor and do whatever is needful and required.

Thank you for your cooperation and willingness to be a part of this research.

Regards

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Bethany Counseling Centre
Church of St. Ignatius
Petaling Jaya, Selangor
Malaysia.

Re: Permission to allow Wong Ching Ching to conduct research for her doctoral degree in Counseling research dissertation entitled: **A heuristic study of clients' spiritual experiences in the counseling process.**

With reference to the above-mentioned matter, _____, Head of Department of this organization, which is located in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia have met and discussed with Wong Ching Ching (Matric No. PHA090017) regarding her Doctoral Degree in Counseling Research Dissertation topic as titled above and her purposed research methodology.

I have no objections with this research that is going to be conducted. I also give the researcher permission to use the premises and associated equipment of the organization in order to conduct and carry out this research.

Thank you.

Regards

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

University of Malaya
Faculty of Education
Department of Education Psychology and Counseling
Research Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Diana-Lea Baranovich
Research Student: Wong Ching Ching

Title of the Study: **A heuristic study of clients' spiritual experiences in the counseling process.**

Thank you for your interest in participating in a dissertation research study being conducted by Wong Ching Ching, M.A., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctoral Degree in Counseling at University Malaya. This study is conducted under the supervision of Dr. Diana-Lea Baranovich, Ph.D., of University Malaya.

The purpose of this study is to understand the spiritual experiences of the therapist and the participant in the psychotherapeutic process. I value your unique contribution in this research study as a co-researcher. By conducting the study, the researcher hopes to learn more about the essence of spirituality as it reveals itself in your experience. The researcher is seeking comprehensive portrayals of what these experiences were like for you; your thoughts, feelings, behaviors as well as situations, events, places and people connected to your experience. You may also share your other personal journals and artworks with me as they can be a source of support and empowerment in the psychotherapeutic process.

Participation in the study involves two steps. The first step involves completing a demographic questionnaire and participant's brief background of spirituality, which should take about 15 to 20 minutes. Step two of the study involves participating in seven to fifteen individual psychotherapy sessions subject to participant's consent; the sessions will take place once a week. Each session will last approximately an hour to 90 minutes. The psychotherapy sessions will be scheduled at a time convenient to the participant.

All of the data collected from the participants is confidential. Demographic information that participants provide will be used for the purpose of describing the participants in aggregate. When writing the collective story and the presenting data, extended quotes may be used; however, any specific words, phrases or information that could identify participants will

not be used. Participants' identities will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants in reports of the research.

Possible risks of participation in this study include mild stress or emotional discomfort in recalling and sharing information about your own experiences of spirituality. Should you become significantly upset by the psychotherapeutic process, therapy session can be stopped any time. Benefits of participation may include reflecting on issues pertaining to spirituality as a source of support and empowerment. Besides, your spiritual experiences are contributing to a study that may bring awareness and benefit about spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By providing a signature below, you are indicating that you have read the procedures described above, and that you agree to participate in this study, including completing a demographic questionnaire and participating in seven or more individual psychotherapy sessions. An additional copy of this consent document is enclosed for your record.

Participant's signature

Date

Thank you for your time and consideration. I genuinely appreciate your time.

Sincerely

Wong Ching Ching, M.A.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Diana-Lea Baranovich.

Appendix E

Title: A heuristic study of clients' spiritual experiences in the counseling process.

Participant's demographic questionnaire

Name: _____

Please respond to the questions below by filling in the blank or circling the choices that best describe you.

Gender : _____

Age : _____

Sexual Orientation : _____

Race: _____

Relationship status (Please circle): 1. Married 2. Single 3. Widow 4. Widower

Language (Please circle):

1. English as a primary language

2. Other language as primary language (Please specify)

Social class (Please circle):

1. Lower class

2. Lower middle class

3. Middle class

4. Upper middle class

5. Upper class

Occupation / Professional title:

Highest educational degree / certificate obtained:

Field of study :

Appendix F

University of Malaya
Faculty of Education
Department of Education Psychology and Counseling

To Whom It May Concern

Consent Of Recording During Psychotherapy Session

I, hereby agree to give permission to Wong Ching Ching, M.A. to record the psychotherapy session which I have with her for research purposes. I am also aware that the therapist's supervisor will be listening to the audio recording for psychotherapy improvement purposes. At any time during the process of psychotherapy, if I feel like stopping the recording, the therapist is obliged to stop the psychotherapeutic process recording.

Client's name : _____

Signature : _____

Date : _____

Therapist's name : Wong Ching Ching, M.A.

Signature : _____

Date : _____

Appendix G

Examples of the extracted portion of the participant's individual transcript

3.5.1 Stage One: Establishing the psychotherapy rapport

Participant A realized her greatest resource for problem solving came from the divine.

C: Which do you think will be the greatest resource that can help you?

PA: A forgiving heart.

C: It cools you down. Have a look, if you want to solve problem, is there any resources that you can use?

PA: My back up. God!

C: What have you discovered now?

PA: This problem can be solved. By using my God, the higher power, the backing support.

(Psychotherapy session 1, 10-3-2012)

Participant B was allowing her inner desire for community life to unfold onto the arrangement of figurines in the sand tray.

PB: When I first see the sand tray, I have had an image of harmony. As I was placing the figurines, my mind was filled with the picture of Isaiah 11:6-9, how the lion stays harmony with the lamb, baby was fine even playing in the snake cave. I think I am going after such environment! All the figurines I chose are of moderate character. These are the characters that create harmony in the universe.

C: What is harmony to you in your real life situation?

PB: It is a good relationship between people, accepting each other, not building up the atmosphere of "fighting" spirit but considerate to the needs of others.

(Psychotherapy session 1, 9-2-2012)

Participant E was able to recognize the fear of change within her.

PE: Yes, I think I want something more, some more flowers.

C: Are you longing for something?

PE: I think I am.

C: What is that something?

PE: A change. I don't know whether it is work or relationship. It's a change. I don't know exactly what? A change of job, may be a new profession, or at the same time I can do what I am happy with, may be a relationship.

C: Do you think you have the confidence to make the change?

PE: Actually I am very scared. I will try.

(Psychotherapy session 3, 21-5-2012)

Appendix H

Examples of the extracted portion of the participant's individual transcript

3.5.2 Stage Two: Implementing the psychotherapy strategy

Participant D realized the creativeness within her to humoring her life is the key to ease her depressed emotions.

C: You have realized something, how do you feel now?

PD: My heart is not so heavy anymore.

C: You were saying you want your portrait to have a three dimension feeling.

What does that 3D mean to you?

PD: Humans are alive being, they are not dead. Many things can be flexible.

C: What have you discovered about yourself?

PD: I have a choice to be flexible. I can use different but creative methods to achieve an outcome that I want.

(Psychotherapy session 2, 12-3-2012)

Participant E acknowledged her intuition was actually protecting her and has given her the wisdom of coping in life.

PE: Probably it is God. No body sensation but I feel comfortable in my heart. Comfort because I feel I am dwelling with myself. Also, the light on top of my head, feeling secure, to be with myself is comfortable. I also see a purple circle.

C: What is that purple circle to you?

PE: My definition is wisdom. I want to say, "dwell with it".

C: Dwell with it?

PE: It came out just now.

C: What do you mean by dwell with it?

PE: Wisdom. Part of wisdom comes from my intuition. Now my mind is telling me to follow it.

(Psychotherapy session 6, 19-8-2012)

Appendix I

Examples of the manifestation of the spiritual experiences:

1. Energy movement and vision that carried messages.

C: How do you feel throughout the process?

PE: Very relaxing. The energy and the life force said now, ok you are connected. So you are becoming one. My heart feels it is beginning to connect. Relax.

C: Is that any image that is emerging?

PE: Ya, an image of a type of plant that is waiting for the flower to blossom, it seems wanting to burst. I feel it is telling me "Be prepared for the burst, taking up the risk."

C: What do you think the message conveys?

PE: I feel a little fear. But on the other hand I am also excited. What's coming? What's next? What's new? All the while you have been talking what gives you life, take up the challenge, take up the risk, just go for it!

(Participant E, Psychotherapy session 5, 16-6-2012)

2. The out of space sensation.

C: How do you feel?

PG: I am floating, not sitting on the chair. My hand not so heavy as before. My heart is a bit heavy, the image of my mother not so clear.

The counselor asked the participant to stay with the situation, she continued another set of left right movements. As soon as the counselor finished the left right movement, she asked the participant about her situation.

PG: I can't see my mother anymore. I still feel the floating sensation with my hand a bit heavy. But my heart feels the loving sensation.

(Participant G, Psychotherapy session 2, 4-7-2012)

3. The chirping sound of the birds.

C: How was the therapeutic process?

PC: I heard the birds chirping.

C: How long?

PC: Two times. The first time not long, the second time was very long. When you were suggesting the white light, the birds started to chirp.

C: How do you feel?

PC: Comfort and relaxed.

C: Any image emerged in your mind?

PC: No. Only the chirping sounds of the birds.

(Participant C, Psychotherapy session 5, 10-7-2012)

4. The sense of stability at the core of the being.

C: When you practice more on meditation or contemplation, you will readjust the head and the heart until they synchronize with each other. Congruence took place when the mind, body and spirit are in tune.

PD: Ya la. Luckily I went to Singapore after that. I was able to cool myself. I discovered actually I am able to forgive my mum. Maybe previously I am not able to forgive her. But she has also stepped back. I was wrong too. The stability in my heart was helping me to get through my emotion!

(Participant D, Psychotherapy session 6, 26-4-2012)

Appendix J

Examples of the presence of the spiritual self:

1. Some were inspired by the presence of spirituality.

PA: The I (heart) is still very clear although there are so much smoke out there, but the heart is not invaded.

C: What is the main reason the heart is not invaded?

PA: There is a protection on the outer layer of the heart.

C: What is the protection?

PA: God la! I am still able to see myself, not covered by the smoke, I have not lost myself.

C: You are still yourself. What will you do in future?

PA: I will be clearer. The smoke will reduce! Anything that is bad, I will keep a distance.

(Participant A, Psychotherapy session 7, 15-7-2012)

PG: Feeling like taking out the grey black energy, that will be better.

C: Do you have confidence to do that?

PG: I should be able to.

C: If you have taken out the grey black energy, what might be the image?

PG: Orange, when I was saying grey black energy has to disappear, I actually see an image in orange (refer to figure 4.18).

C: What will be the message for you?

PG: Should take out the grey black color, my spiritual life will be better.

(Participant G, Psychotherapy session 5, 31-8-2012)

2. Some were healed by the power of the divine.

PC: I heard the birds chirping, it brings comfort. I pray to the Holy Spirit to heal my hurt.

C: What is exactly this Holy Spirit?

PC: I feel the Holy Spirit heals me. He is guiding me to go back to the Lord, closer to Jesus.

C: When you talk about going back close to Jesus, what will that situation be?

PC: Happiness.

C: Where are you now in this journey?

PC: I think there is still a distance, before I can get closer to Jesus.

C: What would you do to get close to Jesus?

PC: Prayer, attending Sunday masses, receiving the Holy Communion. These will help me to get close to Jesus.

(Participant C, Psychotherapy session 6, 15-7-2012)

PE: I felt the white light beaming on my left shoulder.

C: What is that?

PE: Probably it is God. No body sensation but I feel comfortable in my heart. Comfort because I feel I am dwelling with myself. Also, the light on top of my head, feeling secure, to be with myself is comfortable. I also see a purple circle.

C: What is that purple circle to you?

PE: My definition is wisdom. I want to say, "dwell with it".

C: Dwell with it?

PE: It came out just now.

C: What do you mean by dwell with it?

PE: Wisdom. Part of wisdom comes from my intuition. Now my mind is telling me to follow it.

(Participant E, Psychotherapy session 6, 19-8-2012)

3. Some were strengthened spiritually and they realized that they ought to continue praying and meditating for further self betterment.

PD: I wish to feel the nature, the pure energy of the universe, purify myself, casting out the distorted thoughts and prejudices.

C: How do you define pure?

PD: Crystal clear, genuine, not imaginative, the real one. Then I will choose a sheep to cling, feeling warmth and secure. I need fresh air, the chirping sound of the birds and the waterfall.

C: What is significant in your figurines?

PD: Sense of security, I am waiting for "the being" to fill me with the sense of security.

C: What do you expect of this sense of security?

PD: Not ignoring, facing everything without fear, not afraid of anything either God or Ghost, a clear mind, not to be influenced by fear.

C: What do you intend to do?

PD: Planning to join a ten days Vipasana retreat to calm me down.

(Participant D, Psychotherapy session 6, 26-4-2012)

C: How do you feel about the whole process?

PF: I felt I need to leave him. My inner voice has said it, and it is very good. If I do not want to leave him, my inner self will not say it, I feel it is good to leave him. Although a little bit of unwillingness, but I think it is good. My heart already said that.

C: You believe in what your heart says?

PF: I believe.

C: You have a good resource during therapy. When you feel you have not enough strength, what would you do?

PF: Prayer, praying to God.

(Participant F, Psychotherapy session 11, 20-9-2012)

Appendix K

Examples of the extracted portion of the participant's individual transcript

3.5.3 Stage Three: The emergence of the transpersonal self

Participant A was enthusiastic to do charitable work.

PA: I want to give service to a community, or becoming a charitable social worker in a community. But I am not able to leave my friends, my family, my work, I do not have the courage yet to leave my community and join a new community. Totally serving, totally giving.

C: You were saying this is your dream, but you have some consideration, how are you going to bring both closer?

PA: Probably I will wait until my mother pass away. My mother is the only reason that binds me. I can't let go.

Participant A was having the intention to draw up a short-term plan to see whether this would help her to determine her direction in life.

PA: I have not been there, but I always longed for that. In mountainous area, everything will be simple, unlike the modern and complex lifestyle in town. I can go back to the pre-historic life in which I can experience genuineness, goodness and holiness.

(Psychotherapy session 2, 22-3-2012)

Participant B aim to bring peace to the world.

PB: When I first see the sand tray, I have had an image of harmony. As I was placing the figurines, my mind was filled with the picture of Isaiah 11:6-9, how the lion stays harmony with the lamb, baby was fine even playing in the snake cave. I think I am going after such environment! All the figurines I chose are of moderate character. These are the characters that create harmony in the universe.

C: What is harmony to you in your real life situation?

PB: It is a good relationship between people, accepting each other, not building up the atmosphere of "fighting" spirit but considerate to the needs of others.

(Psychotherapy session 1, 9-2-2012)

Participant C was intending to visit the needy in the hospital.

C: What do you intend to do when you take up the visiting role?

PC: I remember the Lord always asks us to serve. I feel that my health does not allow me to do much. But I can take up a simple task such as visiting the sick, consoling them, encourage them, praying for them, asking the Lord to ease their pain. I have gone through a lot with thalassemia. I can understand them.

(Psychotherapy session 7, 27-7-2012)

Participant D was inspired to utilize her talent.

Self depiction of participant D

The flying balloon is a representation of my current self; it is flying freely but it is fragile. However in the future, I will become the hot air balloon; providing expertise to others apart from myself. I have progressed from the first session right up to the end, and feels pride that I have accomplished something.

(Self depiction session, 24-5-2012)

Participant E realized she was on her way to save souls.

PE: When I walk on my time line, I see myself becoming bigger. When I am at the peak, my left hand is shaking. When I press on the anchor point, I actively imagine I am in the state of making money through my networking and friends.

C: How do you feel now?

PE: Feeling good, with every step I take, I am becoming bigger. I am smiling and happy.

C: Is that anything you feel increasing?

PE: I know well my resources; I ought to be brave enough to use them.

C: That's what you think?

PE: Don't keep it, do it!

C: What do you intend to do?

PE: May be take up counseling program.

(Psychotherapy session 7, 26-8-2012)

Participant F recognized her responsibility to be a good mother to her daughter.

PF: Suddenly it came to my mind, the tree trunk looks like my home. I want to provide good things to my daughter, a good family environment. This is my life value. This is my greatest life value.

Pause

PF: The centre of my focus is my daughter. Whenever an incident happens, when I think of my daughter, I will stand very firmly. She is my moral support on everything, without her, the tree will fall.

(Psychotherapy session 8, 23-4-2012)

Participant G would like to share the yoga philosophy with others.

C: What is the reason you put a flower on your head chakra?

PG: I feel human has unlimited resources. Perhaps I need to discover the resources, develop them and spread them.

(Psychotherapy session 4, 25-7-2012)

Appendix L

Examples of the ego strengthening to build up participant's confidence:

PA: I nodded my head many times! It was automatic, it nodded the head!

C: This is your sub-conscious nodded the head. The suggestions are connected to your future, therefore your sub-conscious responded. How do you feel?

PA: Ok!

C: What do you mean by Ok?

PA: No special sensation. Just the nodding of head is beyond my control.

C: Any changes happened, if compare to before the session?

PA: Ah, having the confidence, having the courage, comparatively more than before.

(Participant A, Psychotherapy session 8, 20-8-2012)

PE: When I walk on my time line, I see myself becoming bigger. When I am at the peak, my left hand is shaking. When I press on the anchor point, I actively imagine I am in the state of making money through my networking and friends.

C: How do you feel now?

PE: Feeling good, with every step I take, I am becoming bigger. I am smiling and happy.

C: Is that anything you feel increasing?

PE: I know well my resources; I ought to be brave enough to use them.

C: That's what you think?

PE: Don't keep it, do it!

(Participant E, Psychotherapy session 7, 26-8-2012)

Appendix M

Selection Criteria

Interview questions:

1. Where did you get the information of this psychotherapy session?
2. Would you like to share why you are interested to participate in this project?
3. When do you first encounter “The Divine” / religion / spirituality?
4. How does “The Divine” / religion / spirituality influence you?
5. Describe an incident when you felt / encountered “The Divine”?

Selection Checklist of the Interview Session

No	The Acceptable Response	Yes	No
1.	I am able to commit my time to the psychotherapy sessions.	/	
2.	I am interested in exploring myself.	/	
3.	I would like to encounter the divine / spirituality.	/	
4.	I would like to resolve some unfinished issues.	/	
5.	I am open to in-depth self searching.		
6.	I have encountered the divine / the unknown .		
7.	I am able to describe how the Divine touches / influences me.		
8.	I would like to find the direction in my life.		

Note: Scoring information:

To accept: at least 4 acceptable respond.

Appendix N

Self –introspection of the Therapist

Guidelines that the researcher / therapist used for self-introspection

1. What was the client say or do that triggers the therapist's reactions?
2. What are the therapist's personal beliefs that interfere in working with this participant?
3. How does spirituality or religion influence the therapist's creativity? How does creativity relate to healing in therapy?
4. What are the factors contributed towards making healing happened in therapy?
5. What is attuned to the therapist's experience in the psychotherapeutic process?
6. What aspects of multicultural and spiritual awareness, knowledge, and skills do the therapist anticipate integrating into her work as a therapist, whether at the personal awareness level, in the psychotherapy relationship, or as spiritual interventions?
7. Where is the therapist's comfort zone in bringing up or responding to religious / spiritual transpersonal issues in therapy?

Appendix O

Spiritual Experiences Questionnaire

No	Spiritual Experiences	Yes	No	N/A
1	You were able to explore your inner self.			
2	You were able to get in touch with your inner self			
3	You have the courage to open your heart to the infinite / the higher power / the universal energy.			
4	You were strengthened mentally.			
5	You were strengthened psychologically and emotionally.			
6	You were strengthened physically.			
7	You were strengthened spiritually			
8	You realized that your faith has increased.			
9	You realized that inner healing took place with divine / spiritual intervention.			
10	You were better connected with your inner self.			
11	You were better engaged with your inner conflict and resistance.			
12	You were able to forgive and accept your limitation.			
13	You have experienced that a burden has been lifted off.			
14	You were able to address spiritual elements during the psychotherapeutic process.			
15	You have experienced the transformation of your Self / being.			
16	Transformation has taken place with spiritual intervention.			
17	You can feel the positive life energy / force flowing around you.			
18	You have experienced a greater degree of inner comfort, of self understanding, self acceptance and self responsibility.			
19	You were able to accept your life condition and realized your existential needs.			
20	You have experienced a breakthrough in life.			

21	You have experienced an inner peace and harmony within your inner parts.			
22	You were connected with your body, mind, and spirit.			
23	You were able to acknowledge the power / strength of spirituality in the process of psychotherapy.			
24	You have experienced spiritual realization during the psychotherapeutic process.			
25	You have experienced enlightenment.			
26	The spiritual experiences have enhanced your creativity.			
27	The psychotherapeutic process has provided glimpses of the Divine / higher power that sustained overtime.			
28	You are able to accept the shadow side of your inner self.			
29	You are becoming mindful with yourself.			
30	You have experienced a sense of freedom and sacred within.			
31	You were able to value yourself as who you are.			
32	You were motivated for a better living.			
33	You have the capacity to love in your own way.			
34	You have experienced love, and intend to reconnect with others and the environment.			
35	You were able to find the direction and meaning in life.			
36	You are able to find the dynamic life force to enhance your life.			
37	You are moving towards your goal in life.			

Appendix P

The verification of the spiritual experiences questionnaire:

No	Spiritual Experiences / Participant	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
1	You were able to get in touch with your inner self	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
2	You have the courage to open your heart to the infinite / the higher power / the universal energy.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
3	You realized that your faith has increased.	/		/	/	/	/	/	6
4	You realized that inner healing took place with divine / spiritual intervention.			/	/	/	/	/	5
5	You were better connected with your inner self.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
6	You were better engaged with your inner conflict and resistance.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
7	You were able to forgive and accept your limitation.	/		/	/	/	/	/	6
8	You have experienced that a burden has been lifted off.	/		/	/	/	/	/	6
9	You were able to address spiritual elements during the psychotherapeutic process.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
10	You have experienced the transformation of your Self / being.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
11	Transformation has taken place with spiritual intervention.	/		/		/	/	/	5
12	You can feel the positive life energy / force flowing around you.	/			/	/	/	/	5
13	You have experienced a greater degree of inner comfort, of self understanding, self acceptance and self responsibility.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
14	You were able to acknowledge the power / strength of spirituality in the process of psychotherapy.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
15	You are becoming mindful with yourself.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
16	You were motivated for a better living.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
17	You were able to find the direction and meaning in life.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
18	You are moving towards your goal in life.	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7

Appendix Q

The Consolidated Categories of Spiritual Experiences of the Participants

Category 1: The process of self integration

Sub-categories	1. Personal Growth	2. Self Transformation
Participant A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - befriending her shadow - reconcile with her inner self - involved zealously with charitable activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coming home to the divine - endurance towards nasty environment has increased - longing for spiritual qualities - building a world of love
Participant B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - balancing between spiritual life and worldly life - create the atmosphere of harmony - connection with the 'self' - listen more, talk less - becoming more discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the heart is involved in good deeds - becoming a good daughter of the Universe - God is the priority, moving towards the direction of the Divine
Participant C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making peace with her inner self - reconciliation - listening to the inner voices - getting closer to the divine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - realized she needs to get closer to the divine - enhancing her prayer life - intention to serve the sick and the needy
Participant D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cultivating creative ways to cope with her problems - differentiating herself from her mother - forgive herself and others: freedom of heart and freedom of ability - peaceful within - facing her real self : dealing with the feeling of fear and insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transformation from negative emotions to positive emotions - paradigm shift - momentum of stability in the core of her being: confidence - sustain the stable and firm sensation by practicing meditation
Participant E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - putting things into action - to be my own self - recognizing the divine - connected to the inner self - nourishes her soul by networking with friends and studying counselling courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making changes: stepping out of her comfort zone - the fear became the helpful energy - integration of her inner energy and the universal life force - connecting her intuition and wisdom
Participant F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - heart surrender to God - intention to stop smoking - knew the importance of prayer: gain comfort and security - thanking God for her growth - energized - realizing her life value is to provide a good home for her daughter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - liberated from her past traumatic events - letting go of her prejudice towards mainland China - embracing love of sharing, stays closer to the higher power - freedom within after making realistic decision of letting go of an unhealthy

	- cleared her emotional baggage	relationship with a married man - breakthrough in life
Participant G	- feeling tranquil and peaceful, firm and stable - coping better with her sister's temperament - being mindful with her inner chakra energy - realizing the message of the energy flow: disciplining herself	- liberating from the impact of her mother and her ex-boyfriend - realizing her life goal - persistent on self discipline - freeing herself from the old self

Category 2: The expression of the spiritual experiences

Sub-categories	1. Explicit	2. Implicit
Participant A	- a red beating heart with dark smoky Background	- the white light overturning the dark spot - desolate spiritual experiences: the dark spot, feeling fear and cold
Participant B	- associating spirituality in the sand tray: image of harmony and communion	- out of space sensation
Participant C	- chirping sounds of the birds	- brightness in front of the eyes - feeling contented and firm within
Participant D		- vision of a swan on a lake - momentum of stability
Participant E	- visions of a plant that is going to burst, a purple circle, a beaming white light on her left shoulder and top of her head - signified the bird as the divine who granted calmness, comfort and happiness	- feeling peace, secure and freedom within - integration of her inner energy and the universal life force
Participant F	- soothing music: hymnal to Mary and the emergence of the image of Jesus, with the lyric 'whenever you are, whenever you go, Jesus is here' - gained courage from the ego state of the divine power	- touched by the divine Father in her faith - gaining insights
Participant G	- the connection of the chakra energies - vision of the blossoming lotus - grey black energy turning into an orange energy	- experiencing the energy of warmth and Love

Category 3: The meaning of life and self value

Emerging characteristics	Vary from one participant to another participant
Participant A	- charitable activities, impart spiritual experiences, building a world of love
Participant B	- good daughter of the universe, little flower of Theresa, witness of harmony and communion, becoming a nun
Participant C	- answering to divine calling, sharing her life with patients in the hospital, expressing loving kindness
Participant D	- discover talent, inspire potential, put things together and see things clearly, enjoy life with freedom
Participant E	- networking with people, nurturing herself with counselling courses, a life that could fulfil her soul
Participant F	- work as a creative florist, good mother, renewed ordinary lady
Participant G	- self cultivation, yoga meditation, sharing yoga philosophy

Category 4: Self depiction: Quality of self actualization

Emerging Characteristics	Vary from one participant to another participant
Participant A	- A lighted candle
Participant B	- A sailing ship
Participant C	- A little angel
Participant D	- A flying balloon
Participant E	- Various colours with integrated meanings
Participant F	- White female figurine with a red heart
Participant G	- A blossoming lotus

Appendix R

The Process of Examining the Researcher's Journal to allow New Insights to Emerge

Original Data	Original Data
1. Psychotherapy transcript (Participant C, psychotherapy session 5) PC: Two times. The first time not long, the second time was very long. When you were suggesting the white light, the birds started to chirp. C: How do you feel? PC: Comfort and relaxed. (Participant G, psychotherapy session 5) PG: Orange, when I was saying grey black energy has to disappear, I actually see an image in orange. C: What will be the message for you? PG: Should take out the grey black color, my spiritual life will be better.	2. Therapist's feelings / perceptions Amazing, something greater is here. These are the participants' resources. Experiencing the inner self is possible. This is beyond human understanding! It could be the participants' spiritual affiliation influence...



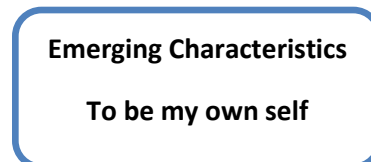
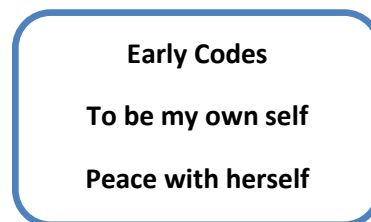
New Insights Emerged

1. Spirituality is something greater than the human self.
2. Spiritual experiences can be described in a variety of ways.
3. The experiences of spirituality can serve as a resources and strength to the participants' self care system.
4. The participants' spiritual affiliations may provide transcendent elements that flooded their consciousness.

Appendix S

The Process of Formulating the Original Data into Emerging Characteristics

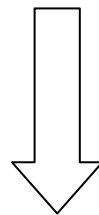
Original Data	Original Data
1. Psychotherapy transcript (Participant E, psychotherapy session 4) PE: Moving forward to the dream. It is still be myself, where my heart is. The house is the place where my soul can rest.	2. Participant's personal reflection The Divine is within me. The Divine is in my heart, I felt peace.
3. The spiritual experiences questionnaire a. You were able to get in touch with your inner self. b. You were better connected with your inner self.	4. Therapist's understanding Participant E wants to be herself. Participant E is at peace with herself.



Appendix T

A Summary of the Framework of Data Analysis for the Findings and Discussion

The Participants' Spiritual Experiences	The Therapist's Spiritual Experiences	The Participants' and The Therapist's Shared Spiritual Experiences
1. The process of self integration (as shown in pp. 221-230).	1. The therapist's heuristic reflection on the psychotherapeutic process (as shown in pp.215-221).	1. The early stage of the psychotherapeutic process: Awakening (as shown in pp.265-266).
2. The explicit and the implicit spiritual experiences (as shown in pp.230-239).	2. The therapist's spiritual experiences (as shown in pp.255-271):	2. The middle stage of the psychotherapeutic process: Resiliency (as shown in pp.267-270).
3. The meaning of life and self value (as shown in pp.239-245).	(a) The integrated self.	3. The final stage of the psychotherapeutic process: Wholesome (as shown in pp.270-271).
4. The relative absence of desolate spiritual experiences (as shown in pp.245-246).	(b) The consolation versus the desolation.	
5. The self depiction of the participants (as shown in pp.246-253).	(c) The affirmation.	
6. Personal documents, journals and artwork have been incorporated in the self depiction.	3. The self depiction of the therapist (as shown in pp.263-264).	

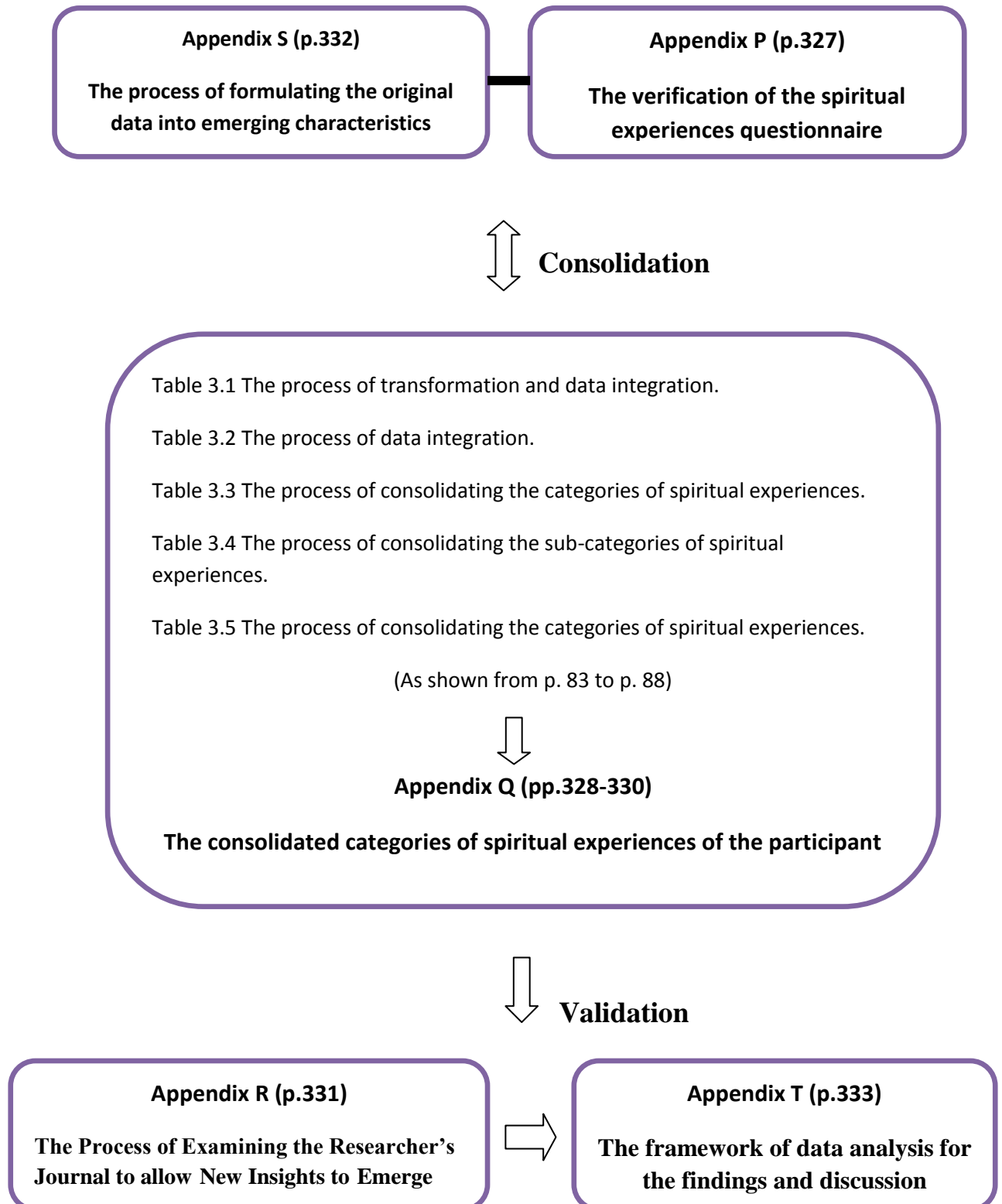


The Collective Depiction

(as shown in pp. 274-276).

Appendix U

The Movement and The Connection of The Supervisors' Process of Validation of The Findings



Appendix V

Transcript of Participant E

4th session 3-6-2012 (Note: C: Therapist, PE: Participant E)

C: What is the direction of your tray?

PE: I guess I am in the midst of moving forward to something that I like to do.

Something I dream about. In the midst toward the direction, it might not as easy as I thought. I might go through some obstacles in order to teach there. The place might be greenery, might not be something that I imagine. Somehow that's is the place I like to be.

C: Can you tell me more about the place you would like to go?

PE: The place that I would like to go is the place that I would like to be myself. Doing something I like. Freedom and happy. It is not too high that I cannot achieve and that I cannot manage.

C: Any idea of that freedom, and that happiness?

PE: (Pause) I want to be free. Talking about that place, I am thinking it might not be something that is too far away. It might be the centre part of me – the heart. How I feel about it.

C: You mean that place is actually within you?

PE: It's depend on how I want to say it, to feel it and think about it.

C: Ok, anything attract your attention in the tray?

PE: The bridge. From one end to the other end. I guess it took a bit of courage in order to reach that place.

C: Can you elaborate more about that place?

PE: The place is where my heart is. To be happy is to be myself. To be grounded is to do something that I like. I am not sure.

C: You have not found the answer?

PE: To be specific, I wouldn't know. To be grounded, for me I always thought that I am a simple person. May be there are things that I am good at. I like to be my own self.

C: In the tray, can you find the figurine that represent grounded?

PE: There are two things that come to me, either this house or the trees.

C: Which do you choose?

PE: House is very nice and structured, somehow I don't feel life in it. It's like guideline or benchmark, I still choose trees.

C: What come into your mind when you choose the trees?

PE: When I choose the trees, is always coming back to be deeply rooted in life. Deeply rooted means what I believe is what I am doing. What I am doing is what I believe. That's why the root is going deep down underneath and the trees are going up. It might bear fruits and flowers. And I feel good about it.

C: Is that any connection to your life currently?

PE: I saw new branches coming out. The tree trunk is getting bigger. I saw flowers but no fruits yet.

C: What do the flowers mean to you?

PE: Something I believe, it gives insight and I become a better person.

C: Anything more you want to share about the trees?

PE: I still got dog with me. And somehow or rather the tortoise follows behind. I guess dog signifies royalty, trust and security.

C: Do you have anybody in your life that gives you security and trust?

PE: Yes. There is (sobbing)

..... (some sensitive issues)

C: Is that ok to continue?

PE: Ya.

C: Are you in the tray?

PE: Nod her head.

C: Would you like to share more about yourself in the tray?

PE: I am growing a bit older and wiser compare to the last round. I am moving forward from a hillside down to a flat land. I am quite happy, actually I am no longer sitting under the tree which I did some years ago. I am moving downwards, I am moving forward. I am happy. A bit of resistance, a bit worry whether it will be successful. I don't think that will stop me and I want to move forward. There are friends who are supporting me.

C: If you want to move the figurine of yourself, where would you like to move?

PE: Moving forward to the dream (participant E moved the figurine toward the house). It is still be myself, where my heart is. The house is the place where my soul can rest.

C: What is the bird on the top of the roof?

PE: The bird can see things from far because of its nature. When something stands in a higher place, it can see things from far, can see things that we could not see. As a kind of proactive, for me is a kind of wisdom. Bird can be signifies as someone that can be trusted, someone whom we can rely. As I am processing, the divine came into my mind. I always feel peaceful when birds are around chirping, this is a kind of calmness, comfortable and happy.

C: Can you talk about the landscape in the tray?

PE: Putting high up, that is certain part in my journey. I am in my own comfort zone So from the place where I use to be, I am walking down to the ground. The space is wider. Can be more space after one another. A lot of freedom rather than staying. I still prefer to see things from the top. But it is still good to be with people instead of staying in my comfort zone.

C: What is the theme you would like to give to your tray?

PE: Welcome home.

C: Is that anything else you would like to share?

PE: I wish one day, my trees can bear fruits.

C: Ok, I wish you well.

Right now, I would like you to write the insights that you have gained from the session.

Appendix W

Transcript of Participant C

5th session 10-7-2012

Before applying the technique of EMDR (Eye Movement Dissociation and Reprocessing), the therapist set up with the client about the node client is going to use, her positive and negative belief and her body sensation. The therapist also informed participant C that she might touch her on her shoulder.

Participant C has decided her node as her cousin's awful face. Her negative belief was brought up: "they did not care about my feelings". Her positive belief was her confidence.

(Note: C: Therapist, PC: Participant C)

C: Are you ready?

PC: Yes.

C: Now, look straight and follow the movement of my index finger. Thinking about the your cousin's awful face.

The therapist started the left and right eye movement.

C: How do you feel?

PC: Better.

C: Ok, one more time.

The therapist started another round of the left and right eye movement.

C: How do you feel now?

PC: ok.

C: What is the image of your cousin now?

PC: Her face looks normal

C: One more time. Stay where you are.

The therapist did the left and right eye movement again.

C: How is now?

PC: I feel that I am not hating her anymore.

C: How is the image?

PC: Ok, normal.

C: Let's try one more time.

The therapist did the left and right eye movement again.

C: How do you feel now?

PC: A bit dizzy.

C: May be the left right movement that causes you dizzy, I will try using your shoulder.

How do you feel right now?

PC: Comfortable. The image is normal.

C: What do you mean by normal?

PC: Is like her normal day when she came to her father's house. Looks like nothing.

C: What about before EMDR?

PC: I do not like to look at her, she is awful. Because she has hurt me!

C: What about now?

PC: No more hate.

C: Right now, stay with the image of your cousin, plus the confidence, from 0 to 7, how many marks you rate yourself?

PC: Five.

C: Now, you can close your eyes. I am going to press on your shoulder with my finger.

The therapist started the left right movement by using the index finger to press on participant C's shoulder.

C: How do you feel now?

PC: OK.

C: Is that a difference compare to the last round?

PC: Yes, feeling a little bit better.

C: Right, close your eyes, one more time.

The therapist did the left right movement by using the index finger to press on participant C's shoulder.

C: How do you feel now?

PC: Comfortable.

C: How many marks do you rate yourself now?

PC: Six.

C: Ok, close your eyes, one more time.

The therapist did the left right movement by using the index finger to press on participant C's shoulder.

PC: A lot more better, seven marks now.

C: What about the image?

PC: There is joy, comfort and relaxed.

C: What about your confidence?

PC: I have the confidence.

C: In a minute time, I am going to use the healing white light to stabilize your feeling right now, you will have to close the eyes and listen to my suggestions.

PC: Ok.

C: When you are ready, you can close your eyes.

The therapist started the Healing white light script with a simple eye closure, and the ten to one deepener...

...focus your attention on your breathing... breath in ... breath out...

Breath deeply and evenly, let your mind and body rest, set aside all cares, set aside all cares, and think only of total relaxation, total complete relaxation, and now just imagine...imagine a dove is descending above your head...The dove is white in

colour...it is surrounded with white light... Is showering upon you...with an open mind... and an open heart...let the power of the white light showers upon you... The healing white light is at the top of your head now... You can see the white light rays out from the body of the dove...the white light is a healing light...it is raying...slowly and soothingly...slowly...slowly...gently...gently...the white light is spreading out...it is spreading out... and it is surrounding your entire body now...your entire body is surrounded by the white light...

The white light began to spread over your entire body...you can see... it is on the surface of your skin... and now... feel it circulate throughout your body...circulate your entire body...from the top of your head... to the upper part of your body...the white light is penetrating the head...the shoulder...the limbs...the hands...and the fingers...slowly...and gently...it flows through the chest...the stomach...the waist...the lower part of your body...the legs and the toes...yes...it is flowing gently all over your body now...

The white light is circulating throughout your entire body...healing and cleansing...healing and cleansing every inch of your body...every organs...the nervous system...the muscles...and every cells of your body...feel the gentle warmth flow through your head...you can feel it melt down to you... to your shoulders...circulating around your neck and down to your back...now up to your back again...into your shoulders and down to your chest...felt it circulate around your heart... through your lungs and into your stomach...through your intestines...cleansing and healing...cleansing and healing...over and over again... it is cleansing and healing your whole body...now...

Every single negative cell of your body...regardless of how bad it is...is cleansed and healed by the white light...You are protected...tiredness...stressfulness...worries... anxiety...fear and insecure...just bounced off...and away from you...you feel a calm flow through your body, its pleasant warm sensation...is releasing any tightness and stress...this soothing sensation is keeping your blood pressure normal...slowly and gently...the white light is keeping your entire body well...the feeling of wellness is felt...yes...the feeling of wellness...slowly and gently...the soothing power of the white light is circulating...you can feel the white light moving...it is moving upward...slowly and gently...the healing white light is moving up...up to the top of your head now... at the top of your head now...back to the dove...at the top of your head...

From now on...you will feel yourself breathing easily...and evenly...now... just let this peace and calm sensation flow through every cells of your body...peace and calm...Now...you are feeling healthy and strong...healthy ...strong...and vibrant...There's a smile on your face...you are feeling wonderful...healthy and strong...healthy and strong...this positive energy will grow stronger and stronger every day...you are owning the positive energy now...the energy belongs to you now...with this existing energy... Every day in every way... you are getting better and better...you are getting better and better...you are worthy of being well...being happy... and being loved...

In a minute time...I am going to wake you up...I will count from one to ten...by the count of eight...you will open your eyes...and at the count of ten...you will be fully wide awake...every part of your body will be with me in the present...all normal sensation will be back to your limb... so ready...one two three...waking up...four five six...waking up...seven and eight...open your eyes...nine ten...wide awake...wide awake...

C: How was the therapeutic process?

PC: I heard the birds chirping.

C: How long?

PC: Two times. The first time not long, the second time was very long. When you were suggesting the white light, the birds started to chirp.

C: How do you feel?

PC: Comfort and relaxed.

C: Any image emerged in your mind?

PC: No. Only the chirping sounds of the birds.

C: It's a blessing ya! Anything you would like to share?

PC: No.

C: We shall stop here.